

THE  
ATHENAID,  
A POEM.

VOL. III.





2392 19

THE  
ATHENAI D,  
A P O E M,

BY THE  
AUTHOR OF LEONIDAS.

VOL. III.

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L O N D O N:  
PRINTED FOR T. CADELL,  
IN THE STRAND.

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M.DCC.LXXXVII.

THE

A. T. H. E. M. A. I. D.

A. P. O. H. M.



AUTHOR'S

VOL. III.

LONDON.

PRINTED FOR T. CASSELL

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M.DCCCXCVI.

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THE  
ATHENAI D.

BOOK the TWENTY-FIRST.

SEV'N days were past, when Lamachus ap-  
pear'd

Before Mardonius. Mighty chief, he said,

I hasted to Themistocles, and spoke

Thy friendly words. His answer first imply'd

No more, than cold acceptance of the terms 5

For Mindarus. At length two hundred, prime,

Of all his num'rous captives, he releas'd;

His minister, Sicinus, in the ship,

Which landed me, detains them near the port,

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B

Till



Till Haliartus, and the promis'd gold 10  
 Are lodg'd on board. Themistocles himself  
 Was bound to Athens with his menial train,  
 His wife and race. We parted on the shore.  
 To me, repeating in a whisper'd tone  
 Thy proffers large, he scornful thus reply'd: 15  
 "The spoils of Asia will exceed her gifts."  
 Then loud thy brave defiance I pronounc'd.  
 He with redoubled arrogance thus brief:  
 "Rouse thy new master; else the plains of Thebes  
 "I may attain before him." Fir'd with rage 20  
 Mardonious here: If Athens do not send  
 By Alexander's mouth submission low,  
 She shall become the spoil of Asian flames,  
 Themistocles spectator of the blaze.  
 Be swift; yon Greek for Mindarus exchange; 25  
 Two hundred talents promis'd shall be paid;  
 These ransom'd warriors I appoint my guard;  
 Brave Mindarus their captain. Stern he ends;

In

Book XXI. THE ATHENAID. 13

In open fight th' Athenian to confront  
Magnanimous he burns; his heated soul 30  
Yields to delusion of that subtle chief,  
Wife like the serpent gliding through a brake,  
When his empoison'd jaws in silence steal  
On some incautious woodman, who, on toil  
Intent, exerts his brawny strength, nor deems 35  
A foe is nigh, nor hears him, nor perceives,  
Till fore the death-inflicting wound he feels.

A summons swift for embarkation flies  
To Haliartus. With regret he leaves  
Dear friends, but dearer his Acanthè's love, 40  
More prevalent his constant zeal for Greece  
Combine to sooth his pain. They wing his speed  
To good Sicinus, who, the ransom'd train  
Discharging, tow'rs Eubœa steers the keel  
With Persian treasure fraught. The ev'ning clos'd,  
When by a hasty mandate to the son 46

\* THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

Of Gobryas, Lamachus was call'd. The chief  
In perturbation of indignant wrath  
Was striding o'er the carpet, which bespread  
His rich pavilion's floor. His words were these :

The Macedonian king is just arriv'd 51  
From Athens ; I have seen him. Dost thou know,  
That supercilious populace hath spurn'd  
My condescension, menac'd ev'n a prince,  
Their host, for proff'ring kindness in my name. 55  
Such my reward. To all th' Ionian Greeks,  
The seed of Athens, I, when victor, left  
Their democratic rule and laws unchang'd ;  
But I will cut all freedom by the roots  
From man's ungrateful race. The wily Greek 60  
Insinuating fram'd this brief reply :

Perhaps the name of Xerxes may offend  
Th' Athenian tribes. Might Europe once behold  
The



Book XXI. THE ATHENAID. 5

The son of Gobryas thron'd, then. . . Ha! proceed,  
Mardonius answer'd. Lamachus again: 65

Doth not all Ægypt, doth not Libya's clime,  
With Asia vast, afford redundant sway  
To gratify one monarch? First of men,  
Why may not Thrace, with Macedonia's realm,  
Theſſalia, Greece, whate'er thy mighty arm 70  
Shall rend by conquest from the western world,  
Become thy prize? They willing might accept  
A sov'reign like Mardonius. Try their choice.

Away—Mardonius spake; and frowning bade  
The Greek retire. Now left alone he mus'd, 75  
Thus questioning his heart: Aspiring thoughts,  
Do ye awaken at the coz'ning touch  
Of this vile tempter? Honour, while my ear  
Detests th' adviser, fortify my breast 79  
Against th' advice—Enough—More swiftly drive,



6 THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

Dull night, thy footy wheels; come, active morn,  
Then to the field, Mardonius. Conquer now;  
Deliberate hereafter on the spoil.  
But thou may'st perish—perish, and the gifts  
Of fortune change to everlasting fame. 85

A sudden trumpet strikes his ear; he sees  
Mafistius nigh. So breaks the polar star  
Through night's unrav'ling canopy of clouds  
On some bewilder'd sailor to correct  
His erring course. Amidst a warm embrace 90  
Began Mardonius: O, in season come,  
Thou more, than half myself! my strength decays,  
My talents languish, ev'n my honour sleeps,  
When thou art far. Mafistius calm replies:

I have compos'd Pallene's late revolt 95  
Through all the district; Potidæa's walls  
Alone resisted; from whose small domain  
O'erflow'd

Book XXI. THE ATHENAID. 7

O'erflow'd by tides the army I withdrew.

I come, Mardonius, not to hear a tale

Of languid talents, or of strength decay'd, 100

Much less of honour sleeping in thy breast,

When I am absent. Honour on a rock

Immoveable is fix'd; its solid base

The billowy passions beat in vain, nor gusts

Of fortune shake; support from none it wants,

Firm in itself. Some augury, or dream 106

Inexplicably dark, o'erclouds thy mind;

Resume thy native manliness, O chief,

Whose loyal faith the mightiest king entrusts

With all his pow'r and splendour, save the crown.

Prepare to pass Thermopylæ, and bring 111

Our labours to decision. Gobryas' son

Compares the language of his spotless friend

With his own devious thoughts, and turns aside

In blushing silence; but, recover'd, sends 115

His mandate forth to march by rising dawn.

8 THE A H E N A I D. Book XXI.

Not with a less commotion in his soul  
 From different cares Emathia's prince resorts  
 To Amarantha. On her beauteous neck  
 In conjugal affection, yet in grief 120  
 Unutterable long he hangs. Alas!  
 My lord, she said, though early I presag'd  
 Thy embassy abortive, hath it prov'd  
 Disastrous? Yes, her agonizing spouse  
 Return'd; what more disastrous, than reproach  
 Among the old, hereditary friends 126  
 Of my forefathers! Amarantha, lend  
 Attention; amply shall my tongue relate  
 Events impress'd too deeply on my heart.  
 I went to Athens; Aristides call'd 130  
 Her various tribes; the image of a god  
 Was he presiding. Innocent, at least  
 Intentionally guiltless, I began;  
 Good will to Athens prompted ev'ry word:

Impow'r'd



Book XXI. THE ATHENAID. 9

Impow'r'd by Xerxes, thus Mardonius greets  
You, men of Athens. Repossess your soil, 136  
Enlarg'd dominion from the royal hand  
Ask and obtain; be govern'd by your laws;  
The son of Gobryas will rebuild your fanes;  
Accept the king's alliance, and be free 140  
With added strength and splendour. Me receive,  
Illustrious people, offspring of the soil  
Which you inhabit. Not a guest unknown  
In Athens, I, your Macedonian host,  
Of warm, unchang'd affection to your state, 145  
Salvation bring, prosperity, and peace.  
Reflect, what numbers of subjected Greeks,  
Some ancient foes to Athens, others friends,  
But now constrain'd, with Xerxes are ally'd.  
The small remainder unsubstu'd consult 150  
Their own defence. Are Spartans in the field?  
Your produce, indefatigable race,  
Your new-built mansions to a second waste



Of flames, your wives, your progeny, they leave  
 To want and rapine. Singly can you face 155  
 Half Greece, all Asia, leagu'd against your weal?

Oh! Amatantha, frowns on ev'ry brow  
 Indignant lowr'd around me. Present there  
 Was Aëmnestus from Laconia's state;  
 He, who, unaw'd by Xerxes on his throne, 160  
 Strange retribution claim'd, and sternly chose  
 Mardonius' self the victim to appease]  
 Leonidas. Th' Athenians he address'd:

“ Invading Sardis to enlarge your sway,  
 “ Athenians, you are authors of a war, 165  
 “ Which now extends to all of Grecian blood;  
 “ Ill would it then become you to desert  
 “ The gen'ral cause. To servitude resign'd  
 “ By you, a double shame the Greeks would cast  
 On Athens, known of old and often prov'd 170

“ By

Book XXI. THE ATHENAID. 11

“ By arms and counsel to redeem and guard  
“ The liberty of nations. I condemn  
“ Like you my tardy countrymen; will bleed  
“ Not less for you, than Sparta. Soon, I trust,  
“ She will arrange her phalanx on the field; 175  
“ Else to your vengeance I devote my head.  
“ Meantime your wives and offspring ev’ry state  
“ In love will cherish. Attic ears, be shut  
“ To this deceiver; his condition calls  
“ On him to plead for tyranny; himself 180  
“ Wields a despotic scepter, petty lord  
“ Of feeble Macedon, and Persia’s slave.”

Severe and awful Aristides rose;  
His manners still urbanity adorn’d:

“ Ambassador of Sparta,” he began, 185  
“ Us thou hast charg’d as authors of the war,  
“ Yet dost extol our vigour in redress.

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- " Of injur'd states. Th' Ionians were enslav'd,  
 " Our own descendants ; Sardis we assail'd  
 " To set them free ; nor less our present zeal 190  
 " For all of Grecian blood, by common ties  
 " Of language, manners, customs, rites and laws  
 " To us ally'd. Can Sparta doubt our faith?  
 " What disingenuous, unbeseeming thought  
 " In her, late witness of our lib'ral proof 195  
 " Of constancy! when ev'ry clime on earth  
 " Was equal to Athenians, where to chuse  
 " Their habitation, true to Greece they stay'd  
 " In sight of Athens burning to attempt  
 " The dang'rous fight, which Spartans would have  
 " shunn'd.  
 " Now from the ruins of paternal tombs, 201  
 " Of altars fall'n, and violated fanes,  
 " Loud vengeance calls, a voice our courage hears,  
 " Enlarg'd to pious fury. Spartan, know,  
 " If yet unknowing, of the Attic race 205  
 " Not

- " Not one to treat with Xerxes will survive;  
 " Our wives and offspring shall encumber none;  
 " All we require of Sparta is to march;  
 " That, ere th' expected foe invades our bounds,  
 " The Greeks united on Bœotian plains 210  
 " May give him battle—Alexander, view  
 " That glorious pow'r, which rolls above our heads;  
 " He first his wonted orbit shall forsake,  
 " Ere we our virtue. Never more appear  
 " Before the presence of Cecropian tribes 215  
 " With embassies like this; nor, blind by zeal,  
 " Howe'er sincere to Athens, urge again  
 " What is beneath her majesty to bear.  
 " I should be griev'd her anger should disgrace  
 " A prince, distinguish'd as her host and friend;  
 " Meantime I pity thy dependent state." 221

Loud acclamations hurried from the fight  
 Of that assembly thy dejected spouse,  
 In his own thoughts dishonour'd. What a lot

Is



Is mine! If Xerxes triumph, I become 225  
 A slave in purple; should the Greeks prevail,  
 Should that Eubœan conqueror, the son  
 Of Neocles be sent th' Athenian scourge. . . .

Hear, and take comfort, interpos'd the queen.  
 To thee I come for counsel, sigh'd her lord; 230  
 I will repose me on thy breast, will hear  
 Thy voice, hereafter ever will obey;  
 Thy love, thy charms can sooth my present cares,  
 Thy wisdom ward the future. She proceeds:

That Greece will triumph, rest assur'd; no force  
 Of these untaught Barbarians can resist 236  
 Her policy and arms. Awhile, dear lord,  
 We must submit to wear the galling mask  
 Necessity imposes. New events  
 Are daily scatter'd by the restless palm 240  
 Of Fortune; some will prove propitious. Wise,  
 To

To all men gracious, Aristides serv'd  
By us in season will befriend our state.

This said, her star-like beauty gilds his gloom,  
While round them heav'n his midnight curtain drops.  
By rising dawn th' Oetæan rocks and caves 246  
Ring with ten thousand trumps and clarions loud.  
With all his host the son of Gobryas leaves  
His empty'd camp. So rushes from his den  
The strong and thick-furr'd animal, who boasts  
Calisto's lineage; bound in drowsy sloth 251  
Bleak winter he exhausts; when tepid spring  
His limbs releases from benumbing cold,  
He reinstates his vigour, and asserts  
Among Sarmatian woods his wonted sway. 255

The bands entire of Persians and of Medes,  
The rest, selected from unnumber'd climes,  
Compose the army. Forty myriads sweep  
Thy pass, renown'd Thermopylæ, to rush  
On Grecian cities scatter'd in their view. 260  
So by the deep Borysthenes in floods

Of

Of frothy rage, by mightier Damube's wave,  
 Nor less by countless congregated streams,  
 The Euxine swoln, through Hellespontine straits  
 Impels his rapid current; thence extends 265  
 Among th' Ægean isles a turbid maze.  
 Three days the multitude requir'd to pass  
 The rough defile. Masistius in the van  
 His sumptuous arms, and all-surpassing form  
 Discovers. Tiridates leads the rear 270  
 Clos'd by the troops of Macedon, whose king  
 Sat on a car beside his radiant queen.  
 Amid the center, on a milk-white steed,  
 Mardonius rode in armour, plated gold  
 Thick set with gems. Before him march'd a guard  
 Of giant size, from each Barbarian tribe, 276  
 For huge dimension, and terrific mien;  
 Preferr'd. Their captain, from his stature nam'd  
 Briareus, born on Rhodope, display'd  
 That hundred-handed Titan on his shield. 280  
 He swung around an iron-studded mace,



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In length ten cubits; to his shoulders broad  
The hairy spoils of hunted bears supply'd  
A shaggy mantle; his uncover'd head  
Was bald, except where nigh the brawny neck  
Short bushy locks their crisped terrors knit. 286

So his own mountain through surrounding woods  
Lifts to the clouds a summit bare and smooth  
In frost, which glistens by no season thaw'd.  
Not such is gentle Mindarus behind 290

In argent mail. Unceasing, on his shield  
Intent, Cleora newly painted there  
A living beauty, but another's prize,  
He views, while hopeless passion wastes the hue  
Of his fair cheek, and elegance of form. 295

Not less th' unrivall'd Amarantha's eyes  
Had pierc'd the son of Gobryas. Instant sparks  
On her appearance from Nicæa first  
Had kindled warm desire, which absence cool'd,  
While she in distant Macedon abode. 300

When

When winter melted at the breath of spring,  
 Her fight again amid th' assembling host  
 Reviv'd the fervour of an eastern breast  
 By nature prone, by wanton licence us'd,  
 To am'rous pleasures. Public duty still 305  
 Employ'd his hours; still smother'd was the flame,  
 Nor on his wishes had occasion smil'd.  
 Ev'n in the absence of Æmathia's prince  
 At Athens, friendship's unremitted care  
 Still in Sandaucè's chamber held the queen 310  
 Sequester'd, inaccessiblely immur'd.

Beside Masistius rode a youthful page  
 Of eastern lineage. He in tend'rest years  
 Stol'n by perfidious traffickers in slaves,  
 By Medon purchas'd, to Melissa giv'n, 315  
 By her was nam'd Statirus, and retain'd  
 Among her holy servitors. This youth  
 On her benign protector she bestow'd.

Masistius

Masistius priz'd her token of esteem  
 Beyond himself, and daily bounty shew'r'd 320  
 On young Statirus. Near the Locrian vale  
 Advancing now the satrap thus began:

O! early train'd by sage Melissa's hand,  
 Gift of her friendship, and in merit dear,  
 Nine months are fled, Statirus, since I bow'd 325  
 In docile reverence, not unlike thy own,  
 To her instruction. All her words divine  
 In precept or narration, from this breast  
 No time can blot. I now perceive a lake,  
 Which holds an island she hath oft describ'd, 330  
 Where tombs are mould'ring under cypress shades;  
 There she hath told me, great Oileus rests.  
 O father of Melissa, should my pow'r  
 To savage licence of invasion leave  
 Thy dust expos'd, my progress were but small 335  
 In virtue's track; Masistius would disgrace

Thy



Thy daughter's guidance—Fly, Statirus, post  
 These my attendant vassals to protect  
 That sacred turf; let each battalion pass  
 Ere ye rejoin me. Uttering this, he hears 340  
 The trumpet's evening signal to encamp.  
 The sun is low; not ent'ring yet the vale,  
 Mardonius halts, and summons to his tent  
 Theffalia's chieftain, faithless Greek, approv'd  
 The Persian's friend, with him th' unwilling prince  
 Of Macedon, to whom the gen'ral thus: 346

To march by dawn your squadrons both prepare:  
 Thou, Larissæan Thorax, in these tracts  
 My trusted guide, with swift excursion reach  
 The Isthmus; watch the Spartan motions there.  
 Thou, Alexander, sweep the furthest bounds 351  
 Of Locris, Doris, Phocis; all their youth  
 In arms collect; ere thirty days elapse,  
 I shall expect them on the plains of Thebes.

He

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He said: The king and Thorax both retire. 355

The morning shines; they execute their charge;

The host proceeds. Once happy was the vale,

Where Medon's father, and his faithful swain,

Now to illustrious Haliartus chang'd,

Abode in peace. No longer is retain'd 360

The verdant smoothness, ridg'd by grating wheels

Of Libyan cars, upturn by pond'rous hoofs

Of trooping steeds and camels. Not this day

Is festive, such as Sparta's king enjoy'd,

When lib'ral hospitality receiv'd 365

His guardian standard on the Oïlean turf.

No jocund swain now modulates his pipe

To notes of welcome; not a maiden decks

Her hair in flow'rs; mute Philomel, whose throat

Once tun'd her warble to Laconian flutes, 370

Amid barbarian dissonance repines.

Now in rude march th' innumerable host

Approach the fountain, whose translucent rills

In

In murmur lull the passenger's repose  
 On beds of moss, in that refreshing cell, 375  
 To rural peace constructed by the friend  
 Of man, Oileus. Thither to evade  
 The noontide heat the son of Gobryas turns.  
 Briareus, captain of his giant guard,  
 Accosts him ent'ring : Image of the king, 380  
 A list'ning ear to me thy servant lend ;  
 Thou goest to Thebes ; far diff'rent is the track  
 To Delphi. Shall that receptacle proud  
 Of Grecian treasure, heap'd from earliest times,  
 Yet rest unspoil'd ? An earthquake, not the arms  
 Of feeble Delphians, foil'd the first attempt ; 386  
 Not twice Parnassus will disjoint his frame.  
 Let me the precious enterprize resume,  
 Who neither dread the mountain, nor the god.

Though not assenting, yet without reproof 390  
 Mardonius looks, postponing his reply.

8 Hence



Hence soon the rumour of a new attempt  
Against the Pythian oracle, the feat  
Of Amarantha's birth, alarms her soul.

Massitius born to virtue, and refin'd 395

By frequent converse with Melissa pure,  
The queen consults. Her instant he conveys

Before his friend, to deprecate an act  
Of sacrilege so fatal once. The cell

She enters. Like Anchises, when his flock 400

On Ida's mount was folded, at the sight  
Of Venus, breaking on his midnight hut

In all the radiance of celestial charms,

Mardonius stands, and fixes on the queen

An eye transported. At a sign his friend 405

Withdrew, but waited nigh. To her the chief:

What fortune brings the fairest of her sex  
To her adoring servant? She replies:

Falſe

False sure the rumour which pervades thy camp.  
 A second time to violate the shrine 410  
 Of Phœbus once provok'd, and sorely felt,  
 Thou canst not mean. The eager Persian then:

Admit th' intent; thy interceding voice  
 Protects Apollo. Not on my request  
 Avoid an impious action, firm she spake; 415  
 Weigh thy own danger in offending heav'n,  
 By piety and mercy win its grace.

No, all the merit shall be thine, he cried;  
 The favour due from heav'n be all thy own.  
 I ask no more than Amarantha's smile 420  
 For my reward; as Phœbus is thy god,  
 Thou art my goddess. Let me worship thus—

He stopp'd, and seiz'd her hand with am'rous lips  
 To stain those lili'd beauties, which surpass'd

Junonian

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Junonian whiteness. Virtue from her eyes 425  
Flash'd, and with crimson indignation dy'd  
Her cheeks: Retire; forget not who I am,  
Stern she rebuk'd him. He, accusom'd long  
To yielding beauty in the wanton East,  
That torrid clime of love, a stranger he 430  
To elegance of coyness in the sex,  
Much more to chaste repulse, when ev'ry bar  
But honour warm occasion hath remov'd,  
These words austere utter'd: Am I chang'd?  
No more Mardonius? Is my dazzling fun 435  
Of pow'r and splendour suddenly obscur'd?  
In state degraded, for a peasant's garb  
Have I exchang'd my purple? Is my prime,  
My form, in all th' impurities of age  
By some malignant talisman disguis'd, 440  
At once grown loathsome? Who, and what I am,  
Thou prodigy of coldness and disdain,  
Remind me. Who, and what thou art, she said,



I will remind thee to confound thee more.

No characters of magic have the pow'r 445

To change a noble and ingenuous mind ;

Thou hast thyself degraded ; thou hast rent

The wreaths, which circle thy commanding brow,

And all their splendour wantonly defac'd.

Thy rank and pow'r exalted dost thou hold 450

From partial heav'n to violate the laws

Of men and gods ? True pattern to the world

Of Persian virtues ! Now to all thy pomp,

Thy steeds, thy chariots, and emblazing gems,

The gorgeous pageants of tyrannic state, 455

I leave thee, son of luxury and vice.

She said, and darted like a meteor swift

Away, whose aspect red presages woe

To superstition's herd. The Persian's pride

Is wounded ; tapers to the cell he calls ; 460

By

By them a tablet, unobserv'd before,  
Attracts his gloomy eye. The words were these:

“ The Spartan king a visitant was here,  
“ Who, by a tyrant's multitude o'erpow'r'd,  
“ Died for his country. Be accurst the man, 465  
“ The man impure, who violates these walls,  
“ Which, by Oileus hospitably rais'd,  
“ Receiv'd the great Leonidas a guest.  
“ Oilean Medon this inscription trac'd.”

Another hangs beneath it in this strain : 470  
“ Laconian Aëmnestus rested here,  
“ From Asia's camp return'd. His faulchion's point  
“ To deities and mortals thus proclaims  
“ His arm to vengeance on Mardonius pledg'd,  
“ The king of Sparta's manes to appease.” 475

Brave was the son of Gobryas, like the god  
Of war in battle; yet a dream, an act

Of froward chance, would oft depress his mind.  
 He recollects with pain the challenge bold  
 From that severe Laconian in the tent 480  
 Of Xerxes; this to Amarantha's scorn  
 Succeeding, throws new darkness o'er his gloom.  
 Masistius ent'ring, hasty thus began:

What hast thou done, Mardonius? When I led  
 This princess back, indignant she complain'd 485  
 Of wrong from thee. Thy countenance is griev'd.

Confus'd, Mardonius pointed to the scrolls;  
 Masistius read; he took the word again:

Now in the name of Horomazes, chief,  
 Art thou discourag'd by a Grecian vaunt, 490  
 Or by that empty oracle which claim'd  
 Atonement for Leonidas? Despise  
 Mysterious words and omens like a man.

But



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But if thou bear'st the conscience of a deed  
Unworthy, just thy sorrow ; like a man 495  
Feel due contrition, and the fault repair.

I have meant wrong, not acted, said the chief.  
Greece once produc'd a Helen, who forsook  
A throne and husband ; what these later dames  
Call honour, which without an eunuch guard 500  
Protects their charms, in Asia is unknown.  
Resentful, gall'd at first, I now admire  
This lofty woman, who, like Helen bright,  
Rejected me a lover, who surpass  
The son of Priam. Thou art gentler far 505  
Than I, discreet Masistius ; sooth by morn  
With lenient words, and costly gifts, her ire.  
Call Mindarus, together let us feast ;  
He too is gentle, I am rough and hot,  
Whom thou canst guide, Masistius, thou alone. 510

Soon Mindarus appears in aspect sad ;  
 Soon is the royal equipage produc'd,  
 Which Xerxes gave Mardonius to sustain  
 His delegated state. Ye rustic pow'rs !  
 Ye Dryads, Oreads of th' Oilean seat ! 515  
 Ye Naiads white of lucid brooks and founts !  
 Had you existence other than in tales  
 Of fancy, how had your astonish'd eyes  
 At piles of gold enrich'd by orient gems  
 Been dimm'd with lustre ? Genius of the cell 520  
 Simplicity had fram'd to rural peace !  
 How hadst thou started at a Persian board ?  
 Fair female minstrels charm the sight and ear ;  
 Effeminating measures on their lutes  
 Dissolve the soul in languor, which admits 525  
 No thought but love. Their voices chance directs  
 To sing of Daphnè by Apollo chas'd,  
 Of him inflam'd at beauties in her flight

Disclos'd,

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Disclos'd, him reaching with a vain embrace  
Those virgin beauties, into laurel chang'd 530  
On flowry-bank'd Orontes, Syrian stream.

Mardonius sighs at disappointed love ;  
Tears down the cheeks of Mindarus descend,  
Recalling dear Cleora, not as dead  
Recall'd, but living in another's arms. 535

Not so the firmness of Mafistius yields ;  
The soft, lascivious theme his thoughts reject,  
By pure affections govern'd. Yet the charm  
Of harmony prevailing serves to raise  
Compos'd remembrance of Melissa's lyre, 540  
Which oft in stillness of a moon-light hour,  
Amid her nymphs in symphony high-ton'd,  
To moderation, equity, and faith,  
To deeds heroic and humane she struck



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With force divine, reproof lawless will,      545  
Intemp'rate passions, turpitude of mind,  
And savage manners in her ethic lay.

The banquet ends, and all depart to rest.

*End of the Twenty-first Book.*

THE

## A T H E N A I D.

## BOOK the TWENTY-SECOND.

**B**Y morn return'd Masistius: Hear, he said,  
 Th' event unpleasing from thy passion sprung.  
 Mardonius, thy temerity hath chac'd  
 From Persia's camp the Macedonian queen;  
 I found her tent abandon'd; but her course      5  
 Conjecture cannot trace. What other stile  
 Than of Barbarians can the Greeks afford  
 To us of Asia? Lo! a youthful king,  
 Our best ally, and my distinguish'd friend,  
 Exerts a distant effort in our cause,      10

C 5

Meantime

Meantime the honour of his queen, by all  
 Ador'd, inviolate till now, our chief  
 Insults, by station her protector sole,  
 When I am absent. Not thyself alone  
 'Thou hast disgrac'd, but me her guardian pledg'd 15  
 By sacred oaths to Macedonia's lord.

'These words, evincing nature's purest gifts,  
 Deserving that society sublime  
 With Grecian muses, where Melissa pour'd  
 Her moral strain, in perturbation plunge 20  
 The hearer ; when importunate, abrupt  
 Appears Briareus, and renews the suit  
 To pillage Delphi. No, in wrath replied  
 The clouded son of Gobryas ; bring my steed ;  
 March all to Thebes. Then humble as a child, 25  
 Who to parental castigation owns  
 His fault in tears, Masistius he address'd :

How



How blest'd the mind by Horomazes fram'd  
 Like thine, serene Masistius, to resist  
 Unruly passions ! never warm desires, 30  
 Pride, or ambition, vex thy equal thoughts,  
 Which from their level no dejection low'rs ;  
 Yet none surpasses thee in rank and pow'r  
 Among the satraps. Uncorrupted man !  
 O, in thyself superior to thy state, 35  
 Me, who so often sink below my own,  
 Befriend in this dark moment. I foresee,  
 I feel disaster in this harsh event.

Masistius here : Reflect, thou mighty chief,  
 At either gate of life, the first and last, 40  
 Yet more through all their intermediate space,  
 Vicissitude and hazard lurk unseen,  
 Supplanting wary steps. To mortal pow'r  
 Those dreadful ministers of jealous heav'n,  
 The elements, are hostile, and to low'r 45  
 The great with changing fortune oft conspire.

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Her cruel sport, Mardonius, need we tempt  
 With our own follies? In thy arduous post  
 Thy hand sustains a balance, where the lives  
 Of nations, where an empire's fate is pois'd 50  
 From hour to hour against the common ills  
 Of chance and nature, which so often foil  
 The wisest; do not super-add the weight  
 Of thy own passions to the adverse scale.  
 I, who am ever to thy virtues just, 55  
 Will not be slow, though grieving at thy faults,  
 To furnish present help. Farewell; I mount  
 My swiftest courser to o'ertake the queen,  
 Whose indignation I can best compose.

Mardonius then: Adventure is a chace 60  
 Thy virtue, no idolatress of fame,  
 Enjoys; thy prompters are the love of right,  
 Care for a friend, or zeal for Persia's state,  
 Which render hazardous attempts thy bliss,

Sublime

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 37

Sublime Mafiftius. Thou haft weight to awe 65

Mardonius, who thy enterprifing hand

Laments, but never to controul affumes,

Yet feels and moft regrets his own defects,

Whene'er they caufe thy abfence. Here they end

Discourfe. Of cavalry a num'rous pow'r, 70

Train'd by himfelf, Mafiftius heads, and leaves

The army filing tow'rds Bœotian fields.

He bends his courfe to Delphi; he attains  
Permeffus, round the Heliconian heights

In argent mazes whifp'ring, as he flows, 75

To paffengers along the winding way,

Which fkirts the mountain, and o'erlooks the fream.

Back from the ford the fatrap's courfer farts

Affrighted. Lo! to crimson, as of blood,

In fudden change the late cryftalline wave, 80

Melodious folace of the fared nine,

Rolls horrible to view. Anon with helms,

With



With spears and bucklers, grating o'er the bed  
 Of loosen'd stone, with limbs and trunks of men,  
 The turbid current chafes. Masistius spurs 85  
 Through all obstruction ; in his forc'd career  
 The clank of armour, crash of spears, and shouts  
 Of battle strike his ear ; the vocal rocks  
 Augment the animating sound ; he sees  
 A flying foldier, by his target known 90  
 A Macedonian guard, who stops, and thus :

Hail ! satrap, hail ! thou timely sent by heav'n,  
 Hasten and protect the Macedonian queen.  
 A host of robbers, by the lawless times  
 Combin'd, have vanquish'd our inferior force ; 95  
 Part of our mangled number choak that flood,  
 Part on the ground lie bleeding. At these words  
 Masistius rushes with his pond'rous lance  
 In rest ; Emathia's beauteous queen in flight  
 Before pursuing ruffians he perceives 100

On

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 39

On her fleet courser. Thunderbolt of strength,  
He hurls to earth their leader giant-siz'd,  
A profligate deserter from the guard  
Mardonian. Next a Phocian born, expell'd  
His native residence for crimes, he flew; 105  
The active staff is broken in the chest  
Of an Arcadian, branded by his state  
With infamy; the victor then unsheaths  
His sabre, op'ning through the savage rout  
A passage wide for death. His faithful train 110  
Surround them; irresistible he sweeps  
The traitors headlong to the flood below,  
Which foams like Simois, by Pelides swoln  
With Trojan dead, and struggling to discharge  
Th' unwonted load in Neptune's briny waste. 115

The conqueror dismounts; before the queen  
His gracious form presenting, in the arms  
Of his sustaining friends he sudden sinks,

Oppress'd

Oppress'd by wounds unheeded, ev'n unfelt  
 Amid the warmth of action. Then her veil 120  
 She rends asunder, and, lamenting, beats  
 Her grateful breast. The notes of sorrow, loud  
 Through all the concourse, dissipate his trance.  
 Serene these words he utters: Honour's track  
 Is perilous, though lovely; there to walk, 125  
 Not fearing death, nor coveting his stroke,  
 Though to receive it ever well prepar'd,  
 Has been my choice and study. But, fair queen,  
 Be not discourag'd at my present state,  
 Wounds are to me familiar, and their cures; 130  
 To Delphi lead me, or whatever place,  
 Thy wish prefers. Mafistius comes thy guard,  
 So will continue, and, ere long restor'd,  
 Hath much for thy instruction to impart.

While these to Delphi, on his march to Thebes  
 Advanc'd the son of Gobryas. Soon the steps 136  
 Innumeros



## Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 41

Innumerable of men and coursers bruise  
 On green Cephissian meads the growth of May.  
 Copææ's lake, perfum'd with orange groves,  
 Which rude unfated violence deforms, 140  
 The multitudes envelop; thence along  
 The sedgy borders of Ismenus reach  
 Cadmæan walls, when now the golden sun  
 Sev'n times had fill'd his orbit. Thebes admits  
 The Persian gen'ral, in these words address'd 145  
 By Leontiades: Thrice welcome, lord,  
 We, thy allies, our counsel to disclose  
 Have waited long. Not hazarding a fight,  
 Thou hast the means to ascertain success:  
 Here seated tranquil, from exhaustless stores 150  
 Distribute gold among the Grecian states;  
 Corrupt the pow'rful, open faction's mouth,  
 Divide, nor doubt to overcome that strength,  
 Which, link'd in union, will surmount the force  
 Of all mankind. The ardent Persian here: 155  
 To

42 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

To court th' Athenians with a lavish hand  
 Have I not stoop'd already? but, disdain'd,  
 That haughty race to destiny I leave.  
 Have I not bid defiance to their boast,  
 Themistocles? Him, forfeiting his word, 160  
 Pledg'd to confront me on Bœotian plains,  
 I haste to summon at his native gates.  
 What are the Greeks, if Athens be reduc'd?  
 Where are the vaunted Spartans? lock'd in fear  
 Behind their isthmian wall, by heav'n in fear 165  
 Of Thorax ranging with a slender band  
 Of his Theffalian horse. Thou rule in Thebes,  
 Brave Mindarus, till I from Athens tam'd  
 Return with fetters for the rest of Greece.

He seeks his couch, and, after short repose, 170  
 By twilight bursts like thunder from a cloud,  
 Which, on Olympus hov'ring black, contains  
 The livid store of Jove's collected wrath

Against

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 43

Against offending mortals. O'er a land  
Deserted, silent, to the empty roofs 175  
Of Athens was the march. Mardonius climb'd  
Ægaleos, thence on Salamis descry'd  
That much-enduring people, who again  
For liberty forsook their native homes  
On his approach. His gen'rous pride relents; 180  
He wishes such a nation were a friend;  
His wishes waken in his breast an awe  
At such a foe. Murichides was nigh,  
A Hellespontine Grecian of his train,  
Nor in his favour low; to him he spake: 185

Look on that haughty, but that gallant race;  
Perhaps at me, by myriads thus begirt,  
Their very children lift their little hands  
In menaces, and cursing list the names  
Of Xerxes and Mardonius. Mount a bark; 190  
Pass with a herald to that crowded isle;

The



44 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

The senators accost; the people shun,  
In pride beyond nobility; repeat  
The words Æmathian Alexander us'd:  
"Ye men of Athens, repossess your homes; 195  
"Enlarg'd dominion from the royal hand  
"Ask and obtain; be govern'd by your laws;  
"The son of Gobryas will rebuild your fanes;  
"Accept the king's alliance, and be free  
"With added strength and splendour." Further say,  
They little know what confidence is due 201  
To him who sends thee. Asian Greeks, subdu'd  
By me, retain their democratic rights.

On Salamis the Hellespontine lands;  
Before th' Athenian senate he displays 205  
The Persian proffer. All indignant hear  
But Lycides, who thus exhorting spake:

From Athens twice expell'd, deserted twice  
By Lacedæmon, who her toil employs

Still

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 45

Still on her isthmian fence, who lifts no shield 210  
To guard our wives and progeny, to save  
From desolation our defenceless fields,  
Or from our homes repel the hostile blaze,  
What can we better, injur'd and betray'd,  
Than listen to Mardonius? be referr'd 215  
His terms of friendship to th' assembling tribes.

The universal senate rose in scorn  
Of such submission. By the people known,  
His counsel rous'd enthusiastic rage,  
Nor Aristides can the tumult cool; 220  
They stone the timid senator to death.  
The women catch the spirit; fierce, as fair,  
Laodice collects th' infuriate sex.  
They hand in hand a dreadful circle form  
Around his mansion, and his wife and race 225  
Doom to perdition, that his coward blood  
May ne'er survive in Greece. Enormous thought!

46 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

Perhaps not less than such excess of zeal  
 Excess of peril in that season claim'd  
 To save a land, which foster'd ev'ry muse; 230  
 That eloquence, philosophy and arts  
 Might shine in Attic purity of light  
 To latest ages: but a sudden fleet,  
 In wide array extending on the shore,  
 Suspends the deed. Before each wond'ring eye 235  
 Timothea lands, Sicinus at her side;  
 When thus the matron to th' impatient throng:

His native friends Themistocles salutes;  
 Eubœan plenty in your present need  
 He sends. Returning, I this crouded isle 240  
 Will disencumber, and to safety bear  
 Your wives and infants; open to their wants  
 Eudora holds her Amarynthian seat;  
 Elephenor, Tifander to the shrines  
 Of Jove invite them, and to friendly roofs 245

Eubœa's



Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 47

Eubœa's towns. As oft Aurora sheds  
Serenity around her, when the gates  
Of light first open to her fragrant step;  
Hush'd at her feet lies Boreas, who had rent  
The dusky pall of night, and Jove restrains 250  
The thunder's roar, and torrents of the skies;  
Such was Timothea's presence, so the storm,  
By furies late excited, at her voice  
Was tame. She learns the melancholy fate  
Of Lycides, to her protection takes 255  
His helpless orphans, and disastrous wife.

Now of its plenteous stores while eager hands  
The num'rous fleet unlade, and Attic dames  
Prepare with good Timothea to embark;  
Just Aristides, first of men, conducts 260  
That first of matrons to his joyful tent,  
Where she began: O righteous like the gods,  
Now hear my whole commission, and believe  
Themistocles,

Themistocles, my husband, feels thy worth.

When at his summons on Eubœa's coast 265

I landed first, "Thrice welcome," he exclaim'd,

"From Athens hither to a safe abode.

"A second emigration I presage

"To her afflicted race." From port to port

Around Eubœa's populous extent 270

With him convey'd, I saw her wealthy towns

To his controul subordinate. Their pow'rs

He now is gath'ring; some achievement new

He meditates, which secrecy conceals

Like fate's dark roll inscrutable to all. 275

From thee an early notice he requests,

Soon as the Greeks, united in one camp,

The sole attention of Mardonius draw;

Th' intelligence to bring I leave behind

That faithful man, Sicinus. Virtuous dame, 280

Wife is thy husband, Aristides spake;

From him no other than achievements high,

However

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 49

However my conjecture they surpass,  
I still expect. Themistocles apprise,  
That I am bound for Sparta to upbraid 285  
Pausanias proud, and summon to the field  
That selfish breed so martial, yet so cold  
To public welfare. Let me next prefer  
To thy benignity a fervent suit.

He straight withdrew, and reappearing led 290  
Two little damsels humble in attire.

Behold my daughters, he resum'd; admit  
These to thy care; now motherless they want  
Protection; ev'n Euphemia they have lost;  
My venerable parent have the gods 295  
Releas'd but newly from the growing scene  
Of trouble. Athens must a parent prove  
To these hereafter, fated to receive  
No portion from a father, who delights



50 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

In poverty. His arms are all the wealth 300

Of Aristides. With a tender hand

She takes the children: O! of men, she said,

Most rich, whose wealth is virtue, in the name

Of household gods this office I accept.

O Aristides! these shall mix with mine; 305

These shall contribute to cement the work,

I long have wrought, the amity begun

Betwixt Themistocles and thee. In tears

Depart the infant maidens from a fire

Of gentlest nature, and in manners bland 310

Not less, than just. Meanwhile to Athens steers

Murichides unharm'd. The rising dawn

Sees with her precious charge Timothea sail.

Lo! from the city clouds of smoke ascend

Voluminous, with interlacing flames, 315

Such as Vesuvius vomits from his gulph

Sulphureous, when unquenchable the heat

Within

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 51

Within his concave melts the surging ore  
To floods of fire. Murichides had told  
His fruitless embassy; Mardonius, wild 320  
With ire, to instant conflagration doom'd  
Th' abode of such inexorable foes.  
They, on the margin opposite, beheld  
Their ancient residence a second time  
Destroy'd; nor utter'd more than just complaint 325  
Of tardy Sparta. When Briareus dire  
With his gigantic savages o'erturn'd  
The recent tomb, which held the glorious slain  
At Salamis; when scatter'd in the wind  
They saw that dust rever'd; in solemn rage, 330  
Devoid of sound illiberal, or loud,  
Each his right hand with sanctity of oaths  
Pledg'd to his neighbour, and to vengeance full  
His blood devoted. Aristides look'd,  
As some incens'd divinity, and spake: 335

Persist, ye sons of folly; crush that tomb;  
 The last repose of yon heroic slain  
 Disturb, therein exhibiting your doom  
 From mortals, and immortals. Thus your pride  
 By heav'n, and Grecian valour, shall be crush'd, 340  
 Your impious host be scatter'd like that dust  
 Which your barbarity profanes. Now, friends,  
 By your appointment I to Sparta fail;  
 You under watchful discipline remain  
 Compos'd and firm; such patience will surmount  
 All obstacle, Athenians; will restore 346  
 In brighter glories your paternal seats.

This said, the isle he leaves, selecting none,  
 But Cimon for associate. In the bark  
 Him Aristides placidly bespake: 350

Son of Miltiades the great in arms,  
 Thy early youth was dissolute; thy look  
 Ingenuous still, and frank thy tongue, reveal'd

Internal



Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 53

Internal virtue; friendship on my part  
Succeeded, thence a study to reclaim 355  
Thy human frailties. I rejoice in hope,  
Thou wilt hereafter prove an Attic star,  
In council wise, triumphant in the field,  
Humane to strangers, to thy country just,  
Friend to her laws, to all her Muses kind, 360  
Who may record thy actions. Cimon here:

If I have virtues, they proceed from thee;  
If I attain to glory, I shall owe  
To thee my lustre. To deserve thy praise,  
What have I yet accomplish'd? I have fought 365  
At Salamis, what more performing there  
Than each Athenian? Aristides then:

True, all were brave; my judgment doth not rest  
On one exploit; thy modesty o'erlooks 369  
The signs of worth and talents, whence my hopes

54 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

Have rank'd thee first of Grecians. To acquire,  
To keep that station, Cimon, be thy choice;  
Thou hast the means; but this impresson hold,  
Who would excel, must be a moral man.

Thus they exhaust their voyage of a day, 375  
When at Trœzenè they arrive, and find  
Renown'd Cleander training for the field  
His native bands. To Sparta thence they sail.  
The Ephori assemble, when they hear  
Of Aristides, who an audience claims; 380  
He comes before them, and austere thus:

Cecropia's race, exterminated twice,  
Demand of Sparta, whether sloth, or fear,  
Or Persian gold her buckler hath unbrac'd.  
Mardonius proffer'd more than equal terms, 385  
Not friendship singly, but enlarg'd domain  
To Athens, who to eleutherian Jove,

To

To Greece was faithful, and the lib'ral gift  
 Disdain'd. Your own ambassador pronounc'd  
 Your phalanx ready ; for its speedy march 390  
 His head he pledg'd. Mardonius takes the field,  
 He lays th' Athenian territory waste ;  
 Where are the Spartans ? Adding work to work  
 For their own sep'rate safety at their wall,  
 Inglorious isthmian wall, while half the Greeks 395  
 Become your foes, and Athens is betray'd.

Pausanias present proudly thus replied :  
 Hast thou not heard, the Hyacinthian rites  
 Employ the Spartans ? shall the heads of Greece  
 Be question'd, be directed when to act 400  
 By you Athenians ? your inferior state  
 May wait our leisure. Aristides here :

Talk'st thou to me of Hyacinthian games,  
 While rude Barbarians riot in our fields,



56 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

While Athens burns, while sacrilege invades 405  
 Our temples, while our ancestors we see  
 Torn from the grave? Pausanias, thou disgrace  
 To thy forefather Hercules, whose arm,  
 To friends a bulwark, was a scourge to foes,  
 What hast thou said? But, guardian to the son 410  
 Of that renown'd Leonidas, who fought  
 Beyond the isthmus, and for Greece expir'd,  
 If thou retain'st no rev'rence for his blood,  
 If thou dost scorn Lycurgus and his laws,  
 If holding liberty an empty name, 415  
 Art now in treaty with a lawless king,  
 No more of words. Athenians have their choice  
 To treat with Xerxes, or to distant climes  
 Expand the sail, resigning to their fate  
 Unfaithful, timid Grecians, who have lost 420  
 All claim to succour—Yet assume your swords!  
 My love for Greece solicits you in tears.  
 Be thou, Pausanias, general of all;

We

We in that noble warfare will refuse  
 No hardship—Ev'n thy arrogant command 425  
 I like the meanest soldier will abide.

Then Aëmneſtus brief: O righteous man,  
 I feel thy wrongs; Laconia's ſhame I feel,  
 Which if delay ſtill blackens, thou ſhalt lead  
 Me, the due victim of Athenian wrath, 430  
 Before thoſe injur'd tribes, by me deceiv'd;  
 Where my own ſword ſhall ſacrifice the blood,  
 I pledg'd for Sparta's faith. Meantime withdraw;  
 I was thy gueſt in Athens, thou be mine.

Not till the day—ſpring Aëmneſtus greets 435  
 His Attic friend: Our citizens are march'd;  
 All night my indefatigable toil  
 Hath urg'd the phalanx on; the various ſtates  
 Within the iſthmus will obey our call;  
 Now ſpeed with me, o'ertake, inſpect our hoſt. 440

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They both depart with Cimon. Sparta's camp,  
 Ere Phoebus couches, Aristides gains ;  
 The marshall'd pupils of Lycurgus there  
 He, ever true to equity, applauds,  
 Who their disgraceful sloth in council blam'd. 445  
 Subordination, silent order held  
 Each in his place ; in look, as virgins, meek,  
 Sedate they listen'd to their chiefs, as youth  
 To learning's voice in academic schools.  
 Thus in some fertile garden well-manur'd, 450  
 The regularity of plants and trees  
 Enrich'd with produce, on a stable root  
 Stands permanent, by skilful care dispos'd  
 At first, and sedulously watch'd. No vaunt  
 Offends the ear, nor supercilious frown. 455  
 Of confidence the eye. Th' Athenian chief  
 Content returns ; on Salamis receiv'd,  
 Cecropia's bands he marshals for the field.

The



The ravage still of Attica detain'd  
Mardonius. Thorax of Larissa quits 460  
His isthmian station; rapid in his course  
To Gobryas' son these tidings he imparts:

The isle of Pelops musters all her pow'rs;  
The isthmus swarms; forsake this rocky land  
For cavalry unfit; collect thy force 465  
To face the Grecians on Cadmēan plains.

Her sleepy sword at last has Sparta rous'd,  
Replies Mardonius? On Cadmean plains  
The Persian trump shall sound; Cithæron's hill,  
Asopian banks, shall soon repeat the notes 470  
Triumphal. Swift he rushes back to Thebes,  
Ere Phoebus darted his solstitial heat.  
As some hot courser, who from pasture led  
Replete with food and courage, spurns the ground  
In confidence and pride, no sooner meets 475

60 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

His wonted rider, than admits the rein ;  
 Such was Mardonius, when from Theban gates  
 Masistius thus address'd him : Be inform'd,  
 That Macedonia's sov'reign is arriv'd,  
 With his fair consort. Her to Delphi's walls 480  
 I guarded, there deliver'd to her lord,  
 Who hath conducted fifty thousand Greeks  
 In arms, auxiliar to thy camp. The queen,  
 Now at a fabric old, to Dircè built,  
 Close by her fountain, and beset with shade, 485  
 Dwells in retreat, which careful thou avoid.  
 But tell me, son of Gobryas, whither flown  
 Was all thy magnanimity, when flames  
 A second time laid stately Athens low ?  
 Though disappointed, couldst thou deem a crime  
 Her constancy, refusing to betray 491  
 A common cause ? Mardonius, thou dost hope  
 To conquer ; why a city of renown,  
 Which in her beauty would have grac'd our sway,

Haft

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Hast thou reduc'd to ashes? Oh! reflect, 495  
What fires of stern resistance and revenge  
This act hath lighted in such gallant hearts.  
That pow'r eternal, by the hallow'd name  
Of Horomazes worshipp'd in our clime,  
Who earth and seas and firmament controuls, 500  
With all therein, looks down not less on Greece,  
Than Persia, both his creatures. Just and wise,  
Intemp'rate deeds in either he resents.

Mardonius answer'd: By that pow'r I swear,  
Thou to a Grecian almost art transform'd 505  
By intercourse with yon religious hill  
Of thy admir'd Melissa. Do I blame?  
Ah! no; too awful art thou to incur  
My censure. O Masistius, I confess  
Thy genius purer, more sublime, than mine; 510  
I often err, thou never—But, dear friend,  
I am dejected ever when thou chid'st;

Yet



Yet thee, my chiding monitor, should fate  
Snatch from Mardonius, he would rise no more.

I only seek to warn thee, not deject, 515  
Rejoins Masistius; turn to other cares;  
Greece is in arms; address thee to thy charge.

This said, to council they in Thebes proceed.

*End of the Twenty-second Book.*

THE  
A T H E N A I D.

BOOK the TWENTY-THIRD.

THE Heliconian records now unfold,  
Calliopè ! harmonious thence recite

The names and numbers of the various Greeks,

Who in array on fair Bœotian plains,

With gleams of armour streak the twinkling wave

Of clear Asopus. Trœzen known to fame, 6

Where Pittheus dwelt, whose blood to Athens gave

The hero Theseus, Trœzen from her walls

In circuit small, from Hylycus her stream,

From her Scyllæan promontory high, 10

From

64 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

From vine-attir'd Methenè, from the isles,  
 Calauria, Neptune's feat, and Sphæria dear  
 To Pallas, daughter of almighty Jove,  
 Two thousand warriors fends. Cleander pass'd  
 The isthmus first; who manly, from the bed 15  
 Of Ariphilia rising, vow'd to deck  
 Her future cradle with a victor's wreath  
 Of laurel new. Her beauteous image grac'd  
 His four-fold buckler. Twice eight hundred youths  
 From Æsculapian Epidaurus march'd, 20  
 From mount Cynortius, and the sacred hill,  
 Titthëon, where the mother of that god  
 Medicinal in secret left her fruit  
 Of stolen enjoyment in Apollo's arms;  
 Where in serenity of smiles was found 25  
 The sweet Phœbean child, while lambent flames  
 Play'd round his temples. Clitophon the chief,  
 A serpent green, the symbol of his god,  
 Bore on his silver shield. Four hundred left  
 Lepræum,



Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 65

Lepr̄eum, clear Arenè, and th' impure 30  
Anigrian waters, where the centaur, fell  
Polenor, wounded by Herculean shafts,  
Dipp'd in the blood of Hydra, purg'd his limbs  
From putrid gore, envenoming the stream;  
Their leader Conon. Of Mycenæ old, 35  
Of Tiryns, built by fam'd Cyclopiā toil,  
Eight hundred shields Polydamas commands.  
Two thousand gallant youths, with standards blest'd  
At Hebe's altar, tutelary pow'r  
Of Phlius, bold Menander led to war. 40  
Himself was young; the blooming goddess shone  
Bright on his buckler. Under Lycus brave  
Hermionè, fair city, had enroll'd  
Six hundred spears. The impress on his shield  
Was strong Alcides, dragging from the gates 45  
Of Dis their latrant guardian triple-mouth'd  
Through an abyss in Hermionean land,  
The fabled wonder of the district shewn.

66 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

Three thousand sail'd from Cephallenia's isle,  
 From Acarnanian, and Epirot shores, 50  
 With various chieftains. Of Arcadian breed  
 Orchomenus twelve hundred, Tegea sent  
 Three thousand. Chileus, prime in Tegea's camp,  
 Was skill'd in arms, and vaunted high the name,  
 The rank and prowess of his native state. 55  
 Ten thousand helms from wealthy Corinth's walls  
 Blaze o'er the champaign; these Alcmaeon leads  
 With Adimantus. Neighb'ring Sicyon arm'd  
 Six thousand more; amidst whose splendid files  
 Automedon commanded. Lo! in air 60  
 A mighty banner! from the hollows green,  
 The wood-crown'd hills in Lacedæmon's rule,  
 Taijgetus, and Menelaian ridge,  
 From Crocean quarries, from Gythæum's port,  
 Therapnè, sweet Amyclæ on the banks 65  
 Of fam'd Eurotas, from a hundred towns,  
 A glitt'ring myriad of Laconians shew  
 Their

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 67

Their just arrangement. Aemneſtus there  
Lifts his tall ſpear, and riſes o'er his ranks  
In arduous plumes and ſtature. So the ſtrength 70  
And ſtately foliage of a full-grown oak  
O'erlooks the underſhades, his knotted arms  
Above their tops extending. Mightier ſtill  
Callicrates appears, in martial deeds  
Surpaſſing ev'ry Grecian. He his fate 75  
Foreſees not; he, capricious fortune's mark,  
Muſt fall untimely, and his gen'rous blood  
Unprofitably ſhed. A firmer band  
Succeeds. Huge Sparta, who forever ſcorn'd  
Defenſive walls and battlements, ſupplied 80  
Five thouſand citizens cloſe-mail'd; a train  
Of ſev'n bold Helots exercis'd in arms,  
Attend each warrior; there Pauſanias tow'r'd.  
In pride the ſon of Atreus he ſurpaſs'd  
Without his virtues, a ſuperior hoſt 85  
Commanding. Never Greece ſuch heroes ſent,  
Nor



68 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

Nor such a pow'r in multitude to war;  
 For landed recent on the neighb'ring shore  
 Th' Athenian phalanx opens broad in fight  
 Their eleutherian banner. They advance 90  
 Eight thousand men at arms; an equal force  
 In archers, flingers, missile-weapon'd sons  
 Of terror follow. Round her naval flag  
 Already four bold myriads from her loins  
 Had Attica enroll'd. What chiefs preside! 95  
 Themistocles, Xanthippus in remote,  
 But glorious action; Aristides here,  
 Myronides and Cimon, Clinias, fire  
 Of Alcibiades, the warrior bard,  
 Young Pericles, and more than time hath seen 100  
 Since or before, in arts and arms renown'd.

The ancient foe of Athens, yet averse  
 Like her to Xerxes, Megara enroll'd  
 Six thousand warriors. From Ægina sail'd  
 A thousand.

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 69

A thousand. Twice six hundred, Phoenix-like, 105  
Sprung from the ashes of Plataea burnt,  
With Arimnestus march'd, th' intrepid friend  
Of him, whose deeds Thermopylæ resounds,  
Diomedon. From Thespia, who had shar'd  
Plataea's doom, two thousand came unarm'd, 110  
Unclad, a want by Attic stores supplied.  
Alcimedon was chief, of kindred blood  
To Dithyrambus; whom, his early bloom  
For Greece devoting, on Melissa's hill  
The Muses sing and weep. Between the roots 115  
Of tall Cithæron, and th' Asopian floods,  
The army rang'd. The Spartans on the right  
One wing compos'd; the men of Tegea claim'd  
The left in pref'rence to th' Athenian host.  
Contention rose; Pausanias sat the judge, 120  
Callicrates and Aemnestus wife,  
His two assessors; thick Laconian ranks  
A circle form; when Chileus thus asserts

The

70 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

The claim of Tegea : Spartans, from the time,  
 The early time, that Echemus, our king, 125  
 In single combat on the lifted field  
 O'erthrew the invader Hyllus, and preserv'd  
 Unspoil'd the land of Pelops, we obtain'd  
 From all her sons unanimous this post,  
 Whene'er united in a common cause 130  
 They march'd to battle. Not with you we strive,  
 Ye men of Sparta, at your choice command  
 In either wing ; the other we reclaim  
 From Athens ; brave and prosp'rous we have join'd  
 Our banners oft with yours ; our deeds you know ;  
 To ours superior what can Athens plead 136  
 Of recent date, or ancient ? for what cause  
 Should we our just prerogative resign ?

Then Aristides spake : Collected here  
 Are half the Grecians to contend in arms 140  
 With Barbarous invaders, not in words

Each



Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 71

Each with the other for precedence vain.  
From his own volume let the tongue of time,  
Not mine, proclaim my countrymen's exploits  
In early ages. In his course he views 145

The varying face of nature, sea to land,  
Land turn'd to sea, proud cities sink in dust,  
The low exalted, men and manners change,  
From fathers brave degen'rate sons proceed,  
And virtuous children from ignoble fires. 150

What we are now, you, Grecians, must decide  
At this important crisis. Judges, fix  
On Marathon your thoughts, that recent stage  
Of preservation to the public weal,  
Where fifty nations, arm'd to conquer Greece, 155

We unassisted foil'd; more fresh, the day  
Of Salamis recall. Enough of words;  
No more contention for the name of rank;  
The bravest stand the foremost in the fight  
Of gods and mortals. As to you is meet, 160

Determine,

72 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

Determine, Spartans ; at your will arrange  
Th' Athenians ; they acknowledge you the chiefs  
Of this great league, for gen'ral safety fram'd,  
Wherever plac'd, obedient they will fight.

The sense of all his countrymen he breath'd, 165  
Who for the public welfare in this hour  
Their all relinquish, and their very pride  
A victim yield to virtue. From his seat,  
Inspir'd by justice, Aemnestus rose :

Brave as they are, our friends of Tegea seem 170  
To have forgot the Marathonian field,  
The Salaminian trophies ; else this strife  
Had ne'er alarm'd the congregated host  
Of states so various and remote. As brief  
Callicrates subjoins : Not less our friends 175  
Of Tegea seem forgetful, that their claim

Within

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 73

Within the isthmus is confin'd, the gift  
Of part, not binding universal Greece.

Athenian moderation had before  
Won ev'ry Spartan ; loud they sound the name 180  
Of Athens, Athens, whose pretension just  
The general confirms, restoring peace.  
So in a chorus full the manly bass  
Directs the pow'r of harmony to float  
On equal pinions, and attune the air. 185

Now Sparta's wide encampment on the right  
Was form'd ; sedate and silent was the toil,  
As is the concourse of industrious ants,  
In mute attention to their public cares.  
Extending thence, successive states erect 190  
Their standards. On the left their num'rous tents  
Th' Athenians pitch. In labour not unlike  
The buzzing tenants of sonorous hives,



74 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

Loquacious they and lively cheer the field,  
 Yet regularly heed each signal giv'n 195  
 By staid commanders. Underneath a fringe  
 Of wood, projecting from Cithæron's side,  
 Ascends the chief pavilion. Seated there  
 Is Aristides at a frugal board,  
 An aged menial his attendant sole; 200  
 But from the tribes selected, round him watch  
 An hundred youths, whose captain is the son  
 Of fam'd Miltiades. The neighb'ring bed  
 Of pure Asopus, from Cithæron's founts,  
 Refreshment inexhaustible contain'd. 205  
 His arms th' Athenian patriot in his tent  
 Was now exploring, when he hears the step  
 Of Aemnestus ent'ring, who began :

Most wise of men and righteous, whom all Greece,  
 Not Athens singly, as her glory claims, 210  
 Grant me an hour. Laconian laws, thou know'st,  
 Subordination

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 75

Subordination to excess enjoin.

I am obedient to the man, who holds  
Supreme command by office, rank, and birth,  
While thee my heart confesses and admits 215  
My sole adviser. Haughty and morose,  
O'er uncommunicated thoughts will brood  
Our dark Pausanias; I may often want  
Thy counsel; now instruct me. Is it meet,  
We cross th' Asopus to assail the foe, 220  
Or wait his coming? Let him come, replies  
The Attic sage; let bold invaders court  
A battle, not th' invaded, who must watch  
Occasion's favour. Present in thy mind  
Retain, that Greece is center'd in this host, 225  
Which if we hazard lightly were a crime,  
Th' offended gods with fetters would chastise:  
Our Attic flame to sudden onset points,  
By me discourag'd. Aemnestus then:

76 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

Know, that with me Callicrates unites ; 230  
Farewell ; thy wisdom shall direct us both.

The sun was set ; th' unnumber'd eyes of heav'n  
Thin clouds envelop'd ; dusky was the veil  
Of night, not fable ; placid was the air ;  
The low-ton'd current of Asopus held 235  
No other motion than his native flow,  
Alluring Aristides in a walk  
Contemplative to pace the stable verge  
Attir'd in moss. The hostile camp he views,  
Which by Masistian vigilance and art 240  
With walls of wood and turrets was secur'd.  
For this the groves of Jupiter supreme  
On Hypatus were spoil'd, Teumessian brows,  
Mesabius, Parnes, were uncover'd all.  
Square was th' inclosure, ev'ry face emblaz'd 245  
With order'd lights. Each elevated tent  
Of princely satraps, and, surmounting all,  
Mardonius,



Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 77

Mardonius, thine, from coronets of lamps  
Shot lustre, soft'ning on the distant edge  
Of wide Plataean fields. A din confus'd 250  
Proclaim'd Barbarians; silent was the camp  
Of Greece. These thoughts the spectacle excites  
In Aristides: Slender is thy bound,  
Asopus, long to separate such hosts,  
Or keep thy silver wave from blood unstain'd. 255  
Lord of Olympus! didst thou want the pow'r,  
Or, boundless pow'r possessing, want the will  
Thy own created system to secure  
From such destruction? Wherefore on this plain  
Is Europe thus, and adverse Asia met 260  
For human carnage? Natural this search,  
Yet but a waste of reason. Let me shun  
Unprofitable wand'rings o'er the land  
Obscure of trackless mystery; to see  
The path of virtue open is enough. 265  
Whate'er the cause of evil, he, who knows

78 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

Himself not partner in that cause, attains  
 Enough of knowledge; all the rest is dream  
 Of falsely-styl'd philosophy. My task  
 Is to destroy the enemies of Greece; 270  
 Be active there, my faculties, and lose  
 Nor time, nor thought. Revisiting his tent,  
 Sicinus call'd apart he thus instructs:

Return, discreet and faithful, to the son  
 Of Neocles; thy own observing eye 275  
 Will prompt thy tongue; this notice sole I send.  
 We will not hurry to a gen'ral fight.  
 Bless in my name Timothea; bless her sons,  
 Her daughters; nor, good man, o'erlook my own.

Six monthly periods of the solar course 280  
 Were now complete; intense the summer glow'd.  
 The patient Greeks for eight successive days  
 Endure the insults of Barbarian horse

Behind.

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 79

Behind their lines ; when eager to his friend  
The Persian gen'ral : Best belov'd of men, 285  
Impart thy counsel. Lo ! this vaunted race  
Lurk in their trenches, and avoid the plain.

To him Masistius : I have mark'd a post  
Accessible and feeble in their line.  
To me thy choicest cavalry commit, 290  
I at the hazard of my life will gall,  
Perhaps may force that quarter. Ah ! my friend,  
Mardonius answer'd, shall thy precious life  
Be hazarded ? let others take the charge,  
Briareus, Midias, Tiridates brave, 295  
Or Mindarus ; a thousand leaders bold  
This host affords. Masistius, in the gloom  
Of midnight from my pillow I discern'd  
Thy gracious figure on a steed of fire ;  
Who bore thee up to heav'n, where sudden folds 300  
Of radiant vapour wrapp'd thee from my view.



80 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

At once throughout th' innumerable tents  
Their hue was chang'd to black; Bœotia's hills  
And caves with ejulation from the camp  
Rebellow'd round; the camels, horses, mules, 305  
Dissolv'd in tears. Let Mithra's angry beam  
Pierce this right arm, annihilate my strength,  
And melt my courage! I will rest content  
To purchase thus the safety of my friend.

Masistius answer'd: Son of Gobryas, learn, 310  
That he, who makes familiar to his mind  
The certainty of death, and nobly dares  
In virtue's clear pursuit, may look serene  
On boding dreams, and auguries averse.  
No sign, but honour, he requires; he wants 315  
No monitor, but duty. An attempt,  
My observation hath maturely weigh'd,  
Belongs to me; to others less inform'd  
I will not leave the danger. Quick replies

Disturb'd

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 81

Disturb'd Mardonius, while at friendship's warmth  
Ambition melts, and honour fills his breast: 321

O! worthier far than frail Mardonius, take  
O'er all the host of Xerxes chief command;  
Me from temptation, him from danger guard.

Again Masistius: Son of Gobryas, peace; 325  
My ear is wounded. Ever dost thou sink  
Below the level of thy worth with me,  
With others soar'd too high. What means the word  
Temptation? what this danger to the king?  
O fatrap! lifted by his grace so high, 330  
Thou hast o'erwhelm'd Masistius. May the God  
Of truth and justice strengthen in thy soul  
The light ingenuous, which so much reveals;  
That sense of duty may suppress a thought,  
I dare not clothe in language. Still in mind 335

The parting words of Artemisia bear,  
 Which in its blameless moments oft thy tongue  
 Repeats with admiration. "Look," she said,  
 "Look only, where no mystery can lurk,  
 "On ev'ry manly duty. Nothing dark 340  
 "O'er shades the track of virtue; plain her path;  
 "But superstition, chosen for a guide,  
 "Misleads the best and wisest." Let me add,  
 Worse is the guide ambition, which misleads  
 To more than error, to atrocious acts. 345

I shall despair, Masistius, if thou fall'st,  
 Rejoins Mardonius. Must Masistius then  
 Confort with women, shut from noble deeds,  
 Subjoins the virtuous Persian? Can thy hand,  
 Thy friendly hand, now rivetted in mine, 350  
 Of my degree, and dignity of birth  
 Deprive me, or obliterate the name

With



Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 83

With all its lustre, which my fathers left  
Me to uphold? Or wouldst thou, if impow'r'd,  
Taint my firm spirit with an eunuch's fear, 355  
Among their feeble train my rank confine,  
My strength unnerve, my fortitude debase?  
While these subsist with titles, wealth and state,  
While, as I pass, the crouding myriads shout,  
Here comes Masistius; what is less requir'd 360  
From him, than deeds to manifest a soul,  
Which merits such distinction? We again  
This day will meet, Mardonius—but as none  
Of human texture can the flight foresee  
Of that inevitable dart, which soon, 365  
Or late will strike, I leave these words behind.  
If, blinded still by superstition's cloud,  
Thou wilt believe me in this hour the mark  
Of fate, retain them, as my dying words:  
Ambition curb; let virtue be thy pride. 370

They separated sad; Mardonius still  
 Foreboding evil to his noble friend,  
 He at the frailty of Mardonius griev'd.

Masistius, soon collecting round his tent  
 The prime of Persian cavalry, bespake 375  
 Their captains thus: Your steeds and arms prepare;  
 String well your bows, your quivers store with  
 shafts;

With num'rous javelins each his courser load.  
 I am this day your gen'ral; I rely  
 On your known prowess; and I trust, the hand 380  
 Of Horomazes will conduct you back  
 Victorious; but remember, that the brave  
 In life, or death, accomplishing their part,  
 Are happy. All, rejoicing in a chief  
 Belov'd, his orders sedulous fulfil. 385

In arms, more splendid than for Peleus' son  
 Th' immortal artist forg'd, Masistius cas'd

His

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 85

His limbs of beauteous frame, and manly grace,  
To match that hero, whom Scamander saw  
With Dardan blood imbru'd. In hue of snow 390  
His horse, of all Nisæa's breed the choice,  
Caparison'd in rubies, champs the gold,  
Which rules his mouth; his animated mane  
Floats o'er the bridle, form'd of golden braid.

His page was nigh, that youth of eastern race,  
Whom for his merit pure Melissa gave 396  
To this benignant satrap. To ascend  
His gorgeous seat preparing, thus the chief:

If I return a conqueror this day,  
To that excelling dame who made thee mine, 400  
Who hath enlarg'd whate'er of wise and great,  
Of just and temp'rate I to nature owe,  
Refin'd my manners, and my purest thoughts  
Exalted, I my friendship will prolong

In



86 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

In gratitude and rev'rence; blessing heav'n, 405  
Which thus prefers Masistius to extend  
Benevolence to virtue. If I fall,  
Resume with her the happiest lot my care  
Can recommend, Statirus. Though no Greek,  
Her pupil, say, in offices humane 410  
Hath not been tardy; by her light inspir'd,  
He went more perfect to a noble grave.

*End of the Twenty-third Book.*

## THE

## A T H E N A I D.

## BOOK the TWENTY-FOURTH.

**W**HILE thus Masistius for the field prepar'd,  
 At sacrifice amidst the diff'rent chiefs  
 Pausanias stood, the entrails to consult  
 For heav'n's direction. Like a god rever'd  
 Among the Spartans, was an augur fam'd, 5  
 Tisamenus. The Pythian had declar'd  
 Him first of prophets; he the rites performs;  
 The victim open'd he inspects, and thus  
 In solemn tone: Hear, Grecians, and obey  
 The will of Jove. To pass th' Asopian flood 10  
 Forbear;

88 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIV.

Forbear. With Persian fetters in her hand  
 Ill fortune seated on that bank I see,  
 On this the laurel'd figure of success.

The augur ceas'd; when suddenly in view  
 Th' Asopian current, overswelling, foams 15  
 With eastern squadrons, wading through the fords.  
 Bounds in the van Mafistius on a steed,  
 Whose glist'ning hue the brightest of the four  
 Which drew th' irradiate axle of the morn  
 Might scarce outshine. Erect the hero sat, 20  
 Firm as the son of Danaë by Jove,  
 When his strong pinion'd Pegasus he wheel'd  
 Through Æthiopian air from death to guard  
 Andromeda his love. In rapid haste  
 A herald greets Pausanias: From the men 25  
 Of Megara I come. A post advanc'd,  
 The most obnoxious in the Grecian line  
 To harassing assaults, their daily toil

With



Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 89

With unabating firmness long has held.

Unwonted numbers of Barbarian horse 30

Now sweep the field; a reinforcement send,

Her standard else will Megara withdraw.

Paufanias then, alike to try the Greeks,

And save his Spartans, answer'd: Chiefs, you hear;

Who will be foremost to sustain our friends? 35

Through fear the dang'rous service is declin'd

By many. Indignation to behold

No Spartans offer'd, but the arduous task

Impos'd on others, held Cleander mute;

When Aristides: Herald, swift return, 40

Athenian aid might else prevent thy speed.

The patriot spake, and left the Greeks amaz'd,

Well knowing Athens with abhorrence look'd

On

On Megara, her envious, ranc'rous foe  
Of ancient date, whom now she flies to aid. 45

Meantime that feeblest station of the camp  
Th' impetuous Asian cavalry furround.  
As clouds, impregnated with hail, discharge  
Their stormy burden on a champaign rich  
In ripen'd grain, and lay the crackling rows 50  
Of Ceres prostrate; under sheets of darts,  
With arrows barb'd and javelins, thus whole ranks  
Of Megara, by wounds or death o'erthrown,  
Gasp on the ground. Alcathöus expires,  
The blood of Nisus, Megarenian prince 55  
In times remote, and fabled to have held  
His fate dependent on a purple hair  
Amidst his hoary locks. That vital thread  
His impious daughter sever'd, blind with love  
For Minos, Cretan king, her father's foe. 60  
Masistius pierc'd him; javelins from his arm

Incessant

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 91

Incessant flew ; on heaps of nameless dead  
He laid Evenus, Lyficles, the youth  
Of Cyparissus, and Cratander's age,  
Distinguish'd each by office, wealth, or birth, 65  
Or martial actions. Beasts of chace and prey,  
The wolf and boar, the lion and the stag,  
Within close toils imprison'd, thus become  
The hunter's mark. The signal of retreat  
Is now uplifted by the hopeless chiefs ; 70  
When, as a friendly gale with stiff'ning wings  
Repels a vessel, driving by the force  
Of boist'rous currents in a fatal track  
To bulge on rocks, a voluntary band  
Of men at arms, and bowmen, Attic all, 75  
Restrain the flight of Megara. Expert  
Their shafts they level at the Persian steeds,  
Not at the riders. Soon around the plain  
Th' ungovern'd animals disperse, enrag'd.  
By galling wounds. Olympiodorus, chief 80  
Among



Among the light auxiliars, on the lifts  
 Of Pisa just Hellanodics had crown'd,  
 The first of Greeks in archery. He stands  
 Like Telamonian Teucer on the mound  
 Of Atreus' son, where fate's unerring hand 85  
 Had strung the bow which heap'd with Phrygian  
 dead

Th' empurpled fosse, while Ajax swung abroad  
 The sev'n-fold shield to guard a brother's skill.  
 Still in the field Masistius, who observ'd  
 The active archer, from his lofty feat 90  
 Against him whirls a javelin. Cimon near  
 Receives the blunted weapon on the boss  
 Of his huge buckler. His vindictive bow  
 Olympiodorus bends; the rapid shaft  
 Full in the forehead of the gen'rous steed 95  
 He lodges deep. The high Nisæan blood  
 Boils in its channels through tormenting pain;  
 Ereft the courser paws in air, and hurls

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 93

In writhing agitation from his back

Th' illustrious rider on the plain supine. 100

Against him rush th' Athenians; on his feet

They find him brandishing his sabre keen,

With his firm shield a bulwark to his breast,

Like one of those earth-sprung in radiant arms,

Whom the Cadmæan dragon's fruitful jaws 105

Or Colchian serpent's teeth produc'd. Affail'd

On ev'ry side, his fortitude augments

With danger. Down to Pluto's realm he sends

Iphicrates and Eurytus, who drank

Callirrhoe's fountain; Amynder born 110

On smooth Ilissus, and three gallant youths

Of Marathon. His cuirass strong withstands

Repeated blows; unwounded, but o'ercome

By unremitted labour, on his knees,

Like some proud structure half o'erthrown by time,

He sinks at last, Brave Cimon hastes to save 116

A foe so noble in his deeds, in port

Beyond

Beyond a mortal ; when a vulgar sword  
 That moment through the vizor of his helm  
 Transfix'd the brain, so exquisitely form'd, 120  
 The seat of purest sentiment and thought.  
 His frame, in ruin beauteous still and great,  
 The fatal stroke laid low. An earthquake thus  
 Shook from his base that wonder of the world,  
 The Colossean deity of Rhodes. 125

Of danger all unheeding, by his lord  
 Statirus kneel'd, and o'er his bosom spread  
 His palms in anguish. Timely to protect  
 The gentle youth ingenuous Cimon came,  
 While thus the gasping satrap breath'd his last : 130

Farewell, thou faithful—Bid Mardonius think  
 How brief are life's enjoyments—Virtue lives  
 Through all eternity—By virtue earn'd,  
 Praise too is long—Melissa—grant me thine.



Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 95

In death, resembling sweetest sleep, his eyes 135  
Serenely drop their curtains, and the soul  
Flies to th' eternal mansions of the just.

Within the trenches Cimon straight commands  
To lodge the corse; when lo! another cloud

Of Eastern squadrons, Mindarus their chief, 140

Who, o'er the stream detach'd with numbers new,

Not finding great Masistius, rous'd afresh

The storm of onset. Dreadful was the shock

Of these, attempting to redeem, of those,

Who held the body; but the Attic spears 145

Break in the chests of fiery steeds, which press

With violence unyielding, and the ranks

In front disarm. The archers have discharg'd

Their quivers. Now had Mindarus acquir'd

Undying glory, and the Greeks resign'd 150

The long-contested prize, when threat'ning shouts,

Of diff'rent Grecians, pouring from the camp,

Alarm the eastern chief. Cleander here

With

96 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIV.

With all Trœzenè, Arimnestus there,  
 Diomedon's bold successor in arms, 155  
 With his Plateans, and the Thespian brave,  
 Alcimedon, assail the Persian flanks.

So two hoarse torrents opposite descend  
 From hills, where recent thunder-storms have burst;  
 In the mid-vale the dashing waters meet 160  
 To overwhelm the peasant's hopes and toil.

Myronides and Æschylus in fight,  
 Each with his formidable phalanx moves;  
 Th' encampment whole is arming. From the fight  
 His mangled cavalry the Persian calls. 165

In eager quest of refuge in their lines  
 Beyond Asopus, through surrounding foes  
 The courfers vault like swimmers, who forsake  
 A found'ring vessel, and with buoyant strength  
 Bound through the surge for safety on the beach.

Triumphant in their camp the Greeks replace 171  
 Their standards; thither Cimon's gen'rous care  
 Transports

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 97

Transports Masistius. Eager to behold  
A prize so noble, curious throngs on throngs  
Press in disorder; each his station leaves; 175  
Confusion reigns. The gen'ral host to arms  
Pausanias sternly vigilant commands,  
And next provides a chariot to display,  
Throughout th' extensive lines, th' illustrious dead,  
In magnitude and beauty late the pride 180  
Of nature's study'd workmanship. His limbs  
The hand of Cimon tenderly compos'd,  
As would a brother to a brother's corse.  
Masistius fill'd the chariot; on his knees  
Statirus held, and water'd with his tears 185  
The face majestic, not by death deform'd,  
Pale, but with features mild, which still retain'd  
Attractive sweetness to endear the sight.

First on the right through Lacedæmon's range  
The spectacle is carried; silence there 190  
VOL. III. F Prevails;



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Prevails ; the Spartan citizen no sign  
 Of triumph shews, subordinate to law,  
 Which disciplin'd his passions. Tow' rds the left,  
 Through exultation loud of other Greeks,  
 The awful car at length to Attic ranks 195  
 Brings their own prize, by Aristides met ;  
 There silence too, in rev' rence of their chief,  
 Is universal. He prepares to speak ;  
 But first the mighty reliques he surveys.  
 He feels like Jove, contemplating the pure, 200  
 The gen' rous, brave Sarpedon, as he lay  
 In death's cold arms, when swift th' almighty fire  
 Decreed that Morpheus, gentlest of the gods,  
 Should waft to Lycia's realm the royal clay,  
 From pious friends and subjects to obtain 205  
 The rites of splendid sepulture. Complete  
 Was now the solemn pause ; to list' ning ears  
 Thus Aristides vents his godlike soul :

Here

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 99

Here close your triumph, Grecians, nor provoke  
The jealous pow'rs who mark for chosen wrath  
O'er-weening pride. Though auguring success 211  
From this great satrap's fall, revere his clay;  
Such rev'rence all of mortal mold will need,  
All soon, or late. If comeliness and strength,  
If gracious manners, and a mind humane, 215  
If worth and wisdom could avoid the grave,  
You had not seen this tow'r of Asia fall.  
Yet there is left attainable by man,  
What may survive the grave; it is the fame  
Of gen'rous actions; this do you attain. 220  
I in Psittalia's isle this Persian knew  
Brave Medon's prize; his captive hands we freed;  
To him our hospitable faith we pledg'd,  
Through whom Phœbean Timon was redeem'd,  
With Haliartus, on Eubœa's fields 225  
To signalize their swords. On Oeta's hill  
In him the daughter of Oïleus found

100 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIV.

A spotless guardian. Let his corse and arms,  
Thy acquisition, Cimon, be resign'd  
To piety; a herald shall attend 230  
Thy steps; remove him to his native friends.  
Let Xerxes hear, let fierce Mardonius see,  
How much Barbarians differ from the Greeks.

Minerva's tribes, approving, hear the words  
Of clemency and pity. Cimon mounts 235  
The fun'ral car; attentive and compos'd  
Like Maia's son, commission'd from the skies  
By his eternal fire, the warrior hears  
The full instructions of his patron chief.  
Th' Asopian stream he fords to Asia's tents, 240  
Whence issue wailing multitudes, who rend  
The air with ejulation, while the wheels  
Before Mardonius stop their solemn roll.  
He rives his mantle, and defiles with dust  
His splendid head. Not more the destin'd king

Of



Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 101

Of Judah mourn'd the virtuous heir of Saul, 246  
Mow'd down in battle by Philistian strength  
On Gilboa's heights; nor melted more in grief  
O'er Absalom's fair locks, too much endear'd  
To blind parental fondness. From the car 250  
Descending, Cimon spake: Lo! Persian chief,  
The just Athenian, Aristides, sends  
These reliques, which he honours, to partake  
Of sepulture, as eastern rites ordain.

Then art thou fall'n, too confident, exclaims 255  
Mardonius, too unmindful of my love,  
And anxious warnings! Mithra, veil thy face  
In clouds! In tears of blood, thou sky, dissolve!  
Earth groan, and gen'ral nature join in woe!  
The tallest cedar of the orient groves 260  
Lies prostrate—Destiny malign! I brave  
Thy further malice—Blasted to the root  
Is all my joy. Here sorrow clos'd his lips.

As frozen dead by wintry gusts he stood,  
 Devoid of motion; Mindarus was nigh, 265  
 Whose interposing prudence thus was heard:

O chief of nations numberless! who stand  
 Spectators round, and watch thy lightest look,  
 Confine thy anguish; in their sight revere  
 Thyself; regard this messenger benign 270  
 From Aristides, and thy native sense  
 Of obligation rouse. Mardonius then,  
 As from a trance: I hear thee, and approve,  
 My gentle kinsman. This returning car,  
 With purest gold, and costly vesture pil'd, 275  
 Shall bear the copious tribute of my thanks  
 To Aristides; whom extoll'd to heav'n  
 By excellent Masistius oft my soul  
 Hath heard, the righteous by the righteous prais'd.

Now Cimon interpos'd: That man extoll'd 280  
 Thou dost not, Persian, lib'ral as thou art,

Mean

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 103

Mean to offend ; thy presents then with-hold.

In poverty more glorious, than in wealth

The wealthiest, Aristides frowns at gold.

No costly vestures decorate his frame, 285

Itself divine ; the very arms he wears,

The sole possession of that spotless man,

All ornament reject ; he only boasts

The sharpest sword, the weightiest spear and shield.

Ha ! must I pass unthankful in the fight 290

Of one, Mafistius lov'd, the chief reply'd ?

No, answer'd quick th' Athenian ; from his cross.

Take down Leonidas. A stedfast look

Mardonius fix'd on Cimon : That request,

O Greek ! is big with danger to my head, 295

Which I will hazard, since the only price

Set on the precious reliques thou restor'st.



This said, he orders to his tent the corse;  
 There on the clay-cold bosom of his friend  
 Thus plaintive hangs: Fall'n pillar of my hopes,  
 What is Mardonius, wanting thy support! 301  
 Thou arm of strength, for ever are unbrac'd  
 Thy nerves! Enlighten'd mind, where prudence  
     dwelt,  
 Heart purify'd by honour, you have left  
 Mardonius helpless; left him to himself, 305  
 To his own passions, which thy counsel tam'd!  
 The dang'rous paths of error I shall tread  
 Without thy guidance! Shame, defeat and death,  
 Frown in thy wounds ill-boding—yet thy look  
 Not fate itself of gentleness deprives. 310  
 By heaven a world shall mourn thee—Loud he calls;  
 Which Mindarus obeys. To him the chief:

Thou too didst love Masistius—Fly, proclaim  
 A gen'ral lamentation through the camp;

Let

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 105

Let all Bœotia found Masistius lost. 315

O verify'd too clearly, boding dream

Of mine, by him so fatally despis'd!

See ev'ry head dismantled of its hair,

The soldiers, women, eunuchs; of his mane

See ev'ry steed, the mule and camel shorn. 320

O that the echo of our grief might pass

The Hellespont to Asia! that her loss

Through all her cities, through her vales, and streams,

Beyond the banks of Ganges might be told!

As Mindarus departs, the Theban chief 325

Approaches, Leontiades, who spake :

If there be one, O gen'ral, can replace

Masistius wife, that prodigy is found,

Elëan Hegesistratus, of seers

The most renown'd. His penetrating mind 330

Can from the victim slain, or mystic flight

106 THE ATHERNAID. Book XXIV.

Of birds, foresee the dark events of time;  
Invet'rate foe to Sparta, fore with wrongs,  
He comes thy servant. Opportune he comes,  
Replies Mardonius. In the rites of Greece 335  
Ten hecatombs, before the sun descends,  
Shall to Masistius bleed an off'ring high.  
I will engage this augur at a price  
Beyond his wishes; let his skill decide,  
When to give battle, and avenge my friend. 340  
Collect your Grecian artists; instant build  
A cenotaph in your Dircaean grove,  
Where that pure fountain trills a mournful note.  
There shall Masistius in his name survive  
Among the Greeks; his last remains, embalm'd,  
Among his fathers shall in Susa rest. 346

The Theban goes. Statirus next appears;  
Th' afflicted hero greets the weeping youth:

Ah!



Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 107

Ah! poor Statirus! thou hast lost thy lord,  
I lost my friend, her bulwark Asia lost. 350

The sacred clay to Artamanes bear,  
Left in Trachiniæ chief. His pious love  
(Who did not love Masistius) will convey  
To distant Sestos his embalm'd remains,  
Thence o'er the narrow Hellespont, to reach 355  
His native Asia, and his father's tomb.  
How did he fall, Statirus? Did he send  
To me no counsel from his dying lips?

These, in a sigh the faithful page began,  
Were his last accents. "Let Mardonius think  
"How brief are life's enjoyments. Virtue lives 361  
"Through all eternity. By virtue earn'd  
"Praise too is long—Melissa, grant me thine".

Commend me to Melissa, starting, spake  
The son of Gobryas. From the shameful cross

Bid Artamanes in her presence free 366

Leonidas the Spartan. Now perform

Another act of duty to thy lord ;

Despoil my head of all its curling pride ;

Slight sacrifice to grief—but ev'ry limb, 370

Lopt from this body, and its mangled flesh

Shall in the dust be scatter'd, ere I quit

My chace of great revenge. Concluding here,

He strides impetuous like a stately ram,

Lord of the flock new-thorn. His giant guard 375

Inclose him round ; th' innumerable host

Attend him, all divested of their hair,

In howling anguish to an altar huge,

By hasty hands constructed. Deep the earth

Around is hollow'd, deep is drench'd with blood.

Ten hundred fable victims heap the ground. 381

Now gen'ral silence reigns, as o'er the main

In winter, when Halcyonè laments

Her

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 109

Her Ceyx lost, and Æolus, her fire ;  
By pity soften'd, all the air is calm, 385  
While she sits brooding on her watry nest.  
Amidst a cloud of frankincense the priest  
Of Elis, Hegesistratus, performs  
The rites of divination; awful thus  
At length unfolds the mysteries of time: 390

Hear, all ye nations; great Mardonius, hear;  
Th' Asopian channel is the line of fate;  
The host, which passes, falls; success will crown  
Th' assail'd; th' assailant is to slaughter doom'd.

The multitude, discourag'd by the death 395  
Of their belov'd Masistius, hear in joy;  
Not so Mardonius at revenge delay'd.  
Inaction aggravates his pain; his tent  
Receives him. Solitary there, like night  
Within her cavern, thus he feeds his grief: 400

“ Ambition

“Ambition curb; let virtue be thy pride.”

So spake Masistius, when we parted last  
 To meet no more—I feel ambition cold,  
 Benumb’d by sorrow—“Let Mardonius think,  
 “How brief are life’s enjoyments;” so thy fate, 405  
 Dear friend, evinces—Life itself is short;  
 Its joys are shorter; yet the scanty span  
 Adversity can lengthen, till we loathe.  
 If, on the brilliant throne of Xerxes plac’d,  
 I held the orient and Hesperian worlds 410  
 My vassals, could the millions in my host  
 Compel the adamantine gate of death  
 To render back my friend? O tortur’d heart!  
 Which burn’st with friendship, of thy gen’rous flame  
 Th’ inestimable object is no more. 415  
 What then is greatness? What th’ imperial robe,  
 The diadem and scepter? Could you fill  
 The void, his endless absence hath produc’d  
 In my sad bosom? Were ye mine how vain

The



Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. III

The acquisition, which my grief would loathe, 420  
And, wak'd by grief, let honour timely shun,  
Lest from his grave Masistius should arise  
To shake my pillow with his nightly curse.  
Not hecatombs on hecatombs of bulls  
Heap'd on his manes, not the votive hair, 425  
Nor fun'ral moan of nations could avail  
To moderate his ire; nor all the pow'r  
Of empires join'd to empires guard my sleep:

At length he sinks in slumber, not compos'd,  
But wanders restless through the wild of dreams.

*End of the Twenty-fourth Book.*

THE  
 A T H E N A I D.

BOOK the TWENTY-FIFTH.

**E**RE thus each augur in the diff'rent camps  
 Unmann'd the soldier by religious dread,  
 Eubœa's coast Sicinus had regain'd.

That peopled island's force of ships and arms

Themistocles had muster'd. Oreus held

5

The ready chief, expecting weighty news

From Aristides, which Sicinus swift

Imparts. To him Themistocles: My friend,

I ask no more; the assembled host of Greece

Hath fix'd Mardonius on th' Asopian verge;

10

A hasty

Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 113

A hasty conflict Aristides shuns;  
Then shall the blow, I meditate, be struck,  
Ere thy reverted passage can transmit  
To him my greetings. Stay and see my oars  
For infamous Theffalia dash the waves; 15  
Her Aleuadian race of tyrants foul,  
Friends to Barbarians, traitors to the Greeks,  
Shall feel my scourge. Her plenty I will bar  
Against Mardonius; famine shall invade  
His tents, and force him to unequal fight. 20

He gives command; the signal is uprear'd  
For embarkation. All Eubœa pours  
Her sons aboard, and loads the groaning decks.  
From his Cleora Hyacinthus parts,  
Brave Haliartus from his new-espous'd 25  
Acanthè. Lo! each female seeks the beach,  
Spectatress eager of th' alluring man,  
Whose artful eye could summon ev'ry grace

To

To fascinate both sexes, and his wiles  
 Arm with enchantment. Beauteous and august 30  
 Like Cybelè, prime goddess, turret-crown'd,  
 Source of th' ethereal race, his consort lifts  
 Above the rest her countenance sublime.  
 By her own offspring, and the pledges dear  
 Of Aristides, which her hand receiv'd 35  
 At Salamis, and cherish'd like her own,  
 She stands encircled, her embarking lord  
 Accosting thus: Unfavourable winds,  
 Or fortune's frown I fear not. All the gods  
 Of earth and ocean, who delighted view 40  
 The virtuous brave, contending for their laws  
 With lawless tyrants, will combine to bless  
 Themistocles and Aristides link'd  
 In harmony of counsels. See, dear lord,  
 His and thy children interweave their hands; 45  
 Thy sure success I augur from their smiles.

I from



I from Timothea's, gallantly replies  
The parting chief. This union is thy work;  
Thine be the praise from thankful Greece preserv'd.

He said, and lightly to his vessel pass'd; 50  
While ev'ry sail was op'ning to the wind.

Eubœa, where she fronts the Malian shore,  
Beneath a promontory's quiet lee  
Protects the fleet benighted. Here the son  
Of Neocles aboard his galley calls 55  
His pupil Hyacinthus, whom he thus  
Instructs: Young hero, since Cleora's love  
Could not detain thee from the lifts of fame,  
Fame thou shalt win. Thessalia's nearest bounds  
I from Spercheos in Trachiniæ's bay 60  
Mean to invade. Nicanor and thyself  
With your Carystian force, Nearchus brave  
With his Chalcidians, must a distant course

To

To Potidæa take, whose valiant race  
 The winter siege of great Mafistius foil'd. 65  
 Forewarn'd by due intelligence from me,  
 They will augment your numbers. Through the  
 mouth

Of fam'd Enipeus Potidæan zeal  
 Will guide your helms to rich Larissa's walls,  
 Theſſalia's helpless capital, whose youth 70  
 Attend Mardonius. Land, and burn th' abode  
 Of Aleuadian Thorax, who conducts  
 The foe through Greece. O'er all the region spread;  
 Where'er thou ſeeſt an Aleuadian roof,  
 The reſidence of traitors hurl to earth; 75  
 The flocks and herds from ev'ry paſture ſweep,  
 From ev'ry ſtore th' accumulated grain,  
 Support of Aſia's myriads. O! recall  
 Thy late achievements on the bloody fields  
 Of Chalcis, and of Oreus. They, who brav'd 80  
 Thy native coaſt, of Demonax the friends,

Now

Now in their own Theffalia lie thy spoil ;  
On their wide ruins build thee trophies new.

Commiffion'd thus, the animated youth  
With each Caryftian, each Chalcidic prow, 85  
By morning fails. Three days the Attic chief,  
Skreen'd in a harbour nigh Cenæum's point,  
Refts on his anchors. So, by thickets hid  
In fell Hyrcania, nurfe of rav'nous broods,  
The tiger lurks, and meditates unfeen 90  
A fudden fally on his heedlefs prey.

The fourth gay dawn with fresh'ning breezes  
curls  
The Malian waters. In Barbaric flags  
The wily chief apparelling his masts  
Fallacious, ere the horizontal fun 95  
Couch'd on the ocean, fills with hostile prow  
The wide Sperchean mouth. Along the vales  
Innumerable

Innumerable carriages display  
 The plenty huge for Asia's camp amass'd.  
 Th' encircling mountains all their echoes blend 100  
 In one continu'd sound with bleating flocks,  
 With bellowing herds, and dissonant uproar  
 Of their conductors; whom Thessalia sent,  
 Whom all the extent of Thracia, and the realm  
 Of Amarantha's lord. Th' affrighted hinds 105  
 Desert their charge. Trachiniæ's neighb'ring gates  
 With fugitives are throng'd. Lo! Cleon plants  
 His bold Eretrian banners on the strand;  
 The Styrians form; Eudemus bounds ashore,  
 Geræstians follow; then auxiliars new, 110  
 The subjects late of Demonax; the troops  
 Of Locrian Medon, Delphian Timon land,  
 Themistocles the last; whose chosen guard  
 Of fifty Attic, fifty Spartan youths,  
 Still sedulous and faithful close the rear. 115

They



Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 119

They reach'd in order'd march Trachinian walls,  
Whose gates unclos'd. Majestical advanc'd  
A form rever'd by universal Greece,  
Prais'd by each tongue, by ev'ry eye admir'd,  
The Oilean priestess of th' immortal Nine, 120  
The goddess-like Melissa. Medon swift,  
With Haliartus, met her sacred step.

Her name divulg'd from ev'ry station call'd  
The gazing chiefs, Themistocles the first;  
Whom, by her brother pointed out to view, 125  
She thus address'd: Themistocles, give ear,  
And thou, O Medon, whom, a stranger long  
To my desiring eyes, they see restor'd.

Well may you wonder, that a hostile fort  
Melissa's hand delivers to your pow'r. 130

There is a Persian worthy to be rank'd  
Among the first of Grecians. Just, humane,  
Thy captive, Medon, amply hath discharg'd  
His price of ransom. Nine revolving moons

\*

Beheld

Beheld Mafistius guardian of my hill 135

In purity of rev'rence to my fane,

My person, my dependents. I forfook

At Amarantha's suit my old abode;

A virtuous princess from a sickly couch

My care hath rais'd, Sandaucè, in those walls 140

Long resident with me. Two days are past

Since Artamanes, governing these tracts,

Heard of a navy on Theffalia's coast,

And with his force, though slender, took the field

To guard Larissa. Your descent unmans 145

The few remaining Persians in the fort;

All with Sandaucè and her children flew

To my protection; mercy to obtain

Became my charge; her terrors will 'disperse,

Soon as she knows, Themistocles is nigh. 150

The army halts. Trachiniæ's gates admit  
Cecropia's hero, Medon, and the son

Of

Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 121

Of Lygdamis. Sandaucè they approach,  
Sandaucè late in convalescent charms  
Fresh, as a May-blown rose, by pallid fear 155  
Now languid, as a lily beat with rain,  
Till she discovers with transported looks  
Her Salaminian guardian; then the warmth  
Of gratitude, redoubling all her bloom,  
Before him throws her prostrate. To him ran 160  
The recollecting children, who embrace  
Their benefactor's knees. She thus unfolds  
Her lips, whose tuneful exclamation charms:

O, my protector—Interposing swift,  
His ready hand uplifts her from the ground. 165

Do not disgrace me, thou excelling fair,  
He said; to leave such beauty thus depress'd  
Would derogate from manhood. She replies:

Forbear to think my present captive lot  
 Hath humbled thus Sandaucè. No, the weight 170  
 Of obligation past, my rescu'd babes  
 In Salamis, myself from horror sav'd,  
 Have bent my thankful knee. No fears debase  
 My bosom now; Themistocles I see,  
 In him a known preserver. Melting by, 175  
 Melissa, Medon, Haliartus, shed  
 The tend'rest dews of sympathy. In look  
 Compassionate, but calm, the chief rejoins:

Suggest thy wishes, princess, and command  
 My full compliance. She these accents sighs:

Ye gen'rous men, what pity is not due 181  
 To eastern women! Prize, ye Grecian dames,  
 Your envy'd state. When your intrepid lords  
 In arms contend with danger on the plain,  
 You in domestic peace are left behind 185

Among



Among your letter'd progeny, to form

Their ductile minds, and exercise your skill

In arts of elegance and use. Alas!

Our wretched race, in ignorance and sloth

By Asia nurtur'd, like a captive train, 190

In wheeling dungeons with our infants clos'd,

Must wait th' event of some tremendous hour,

Which, unpropitious, leaves us on the field

A spoil of war. What myriads of my sex

From Greece to distant Hellespont bestrew 195

The ways, and whiten with their bleaching bones

The Thracian wilds! Spercheos views the tomb

Of Ariana, hapless sister, laid

In foreign mold! My portion of distress

You know, benignant guardians, who asswag'd 200

My suff'rings. Then to quit the direful scene,

Revisiting my native soil, to rest

Among my children, and instruct their youth,

As kind Melissa hath instructed mine,

Were sure no wish immoderate or vague. 205  
 But Artamanes—Blushing, trembling, here  
 She paus'd. Melissa takes the word : Sweet friend,  
 Let vice, not virtue blush. Cecropian chief,  
 Her soft attention well that youth deserves,  
 She all his constancy and care. Their hands 210  
 Are pledg'd ; th' assent of Asia's king alone  
 Is wanting, which Mardonius hath assur'd  
 To Artamanes, flow'r of Asia's peers.  
 Him, with unequal force, to battle march'd  
 Against thy ranks, which never have been foil'd,  
 She knows, and trembles. Artfully replies 216  
 Themistocles : Sandaucè may prevent  
 This danger. Let her messenger convey  
 A kind injunction, that the noble youth,  
 Whose merit I have treasur'd in my breast, 220  
 May sheath his fruitless weapons, and, return'd  
 To her, aboard my well-appointed keel  
 With her embarking, seek their native soil.

The

Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 125

The princess hears, and joyfully provides  
A messenger of trust. Assembling now 225  
His captains, thus Themistocles ordains :

Friends of Eubœa, soon as Phœbus dawns  
Your progress bend to Larissæan tow'rs ;  
Your chief is Cleon. Hyacinthus join ;  
To your united force the foe must yield. 230  
Save Artamanes ; bring him captive back,  
But not with less humanity than care.  
Accomplish'd Medon, Haliartus, vers'd  
In Oeta's neighb'ring wilds, your Locrians plant  
Among the passes ; once secur'd, they leave 235  
Us at our leisure to contrive and act.  
Thee, honour'd seer of Delphi, at my side  
In this Trachinian station I retain.

By op'ning day each leader on his charge  
Proceeds. Themistocles inspects the vale, 240

Constrains the peasants from unnumber'd cars  
Aboard his fleet to lade the golden grain.

Before Thermopylæ the Locrian files  
Appear. From Oeta's topmast peak, behold,  
O'er Medon's head a vulture wings his flight, 245  
Whom to a cross beside the public way  
Th' Oilean hero's curious eye pursues.

Oh! stay thy rav'nous beak, in anguish loud  
Cries Haliartus. Shudder while thou hear'st,  
Son of Cæus; on that hideous pile 250  
The bones of great Leonidas are hung.

Then Medon's cool, deliber'ate mind was shook  
By agitation to his nature strange.  
His spear and buckler to the ground he hurl'd;  
Before th' illustrious ruins on his knee 255  
He sunk, and thus in agony exclaim'd:

Should



Should this flagitious profanation pass  
 Unpunish'd still, th' existence of the gods  
 Were but a dream. O, long-enduring Jove!  
 Thy own Herculean offspring canst thou see 260  
 Defac'd by vultures, and the parching wind,  
 Yet wield resistless thunder—But thy ways  
 Are awfully mysterious; to arraign  
 Thy heaviest doom is blasphemy. Thy will  
 For me reserv'd the merit to redeem 265  
 These precious reliques; penitent I own  
 My rashness; thankful I accept the task,

O mighty spirit! who didst late inform  
 With ev'ry virtue that disfigur'd frame,  
 With ev'ry kind affection prov'd by me, 270  
 The last distinguish'd object of thy care,  
 When it forbid me to partake thy fate,  
 The life, thy friendship fav'd, I here devote  
 To vindicate thy manes. Not the wrongs

Of gen'ral Greece, not Locris giv'n to flames, 275

Not the subversion of my father's house,

E'er with such keen resentment stung my heart,

As this indignity to thee. He said,

And, with the aid of Haliartus, free'd

The sacred bones; Leonteus, and the prime 280

Of Locris, frame with substituted shields

Th' extemporeaneous bier. Again the chief:

Leonteus, Haliartus, rest behind;

Achieve th' important service, which the son

Of Neocles enjoins. The pious charge 285

Be mine of rend'ring to Melissa's care

These honour'd reliques. Now in measur'd pace

The warlike bearers tread; their manly breasts

Not long withhold the tribute of their sighs

Ingenuous; tears accompany their steps. 290

His sister in Trachiniæ Medon soon

Approaches; glad she hears him, and replies.

Hail!

Hail! brother, hail! thou chosen by the gods  
 From longer shame to rescue these remains,  
 Which once contain'd whate'er is good and great:  
 Among the sons of men. Majestic shade! 296  
 By unrelenting laws of Dis forbid  
 To enter, where thy ancestors reside;  
 Who, seed of Jove, to their Elysian joys  
 Expect thee, most illustrious of the race. 300  
 Amidst thy wand'rings on the banks of Styx,  
 Dost thou recall Melissa's dirge of praise  
 O'er thee, preparing by a glorious death  
 To save thy country? O! unbury'd still,  
 Did not Melissa promise to thy dust 305  
 Peace in her temple? An atrocious king  
 Hath barr'd awhile th' accomplishment; thy friend,  
 Thy soldier, now will ratify my word.  
 Soon to Lycurgus shall thy spirit pass,  
 To Orpheus, Homer, and th' Ascræan sage, 310  
 Who shall contend to praise thee in their bow'rs

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Of amaranth and myrtle, ever young  
 Like thy renown. In Oeta's fane these bones,  
 Dear to the Muses, shall repose, till Greece,  
 Amid her future triumphs, hath decreed 515  
 A tomb and temple to her saviour's fame.

This high oblation of pathetic praise,  
 Paid by her holy friend, Sandaucè notes  
 Attentive; seldom from Melissa's eye  
 Was she remote. Her eunuchs she deposes 320  
 To bring a coffer large of od'rous wood  
 Inlaid with pearl, repository due  
 To such divine remains. In time appears  
 Th' Athenian gen'ral to applaud the deed,  
 While thus the mighty manes he invokes: 325

Hear, thou preserver of thy country, hear!  
 Lo! in his palms of Salamis the son  
 Of Neocles salutes thee. From a hand,

Which



Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 131

Which hath already half aveng'd thy death,  
Accept of decent rites. Thy virtue fav'd 330  
A nation ; they hereafter shall complete  
Thy fun'ral honours, and surround thy tomb  
With trophies equal to thy deathless name.

He ceas'd. Her mantle on the solemn scene  
Night from her car in dusky folds outspread. 335

Three mornings pass. Anon Sperchæan banks  
Re-echo shouts of triumph, while the vales  
Are clad in arms. Lo ! Cleon is return'd,  
Uplifting bloodless ensigns of success,  
And thus accosts Themistocles : Thy prize, 340  
This Persian lord receive ; our hasty march  
O'ertook his rear. From Larissæan tow'rs,  
A recent conquest, Hyacinthus, join'd  
By Potidæans, and Olynthian spears,  
Was then in fight. The herald I detach'd 345

With fair Sandaucè's message, and thy terms  
 Of peace and safety; Artamanes found  
 Resistance vain, and yielded. From the van  
 Now stepp'd the Persian graceful, and bespoke  
 Themistocles: Accept a second time 350  
 Thy captive, gen'rous Grecian; nor impute  
 To want of prowess, or to fond excess  
 Of acquiescence to Sandaucè's will,  
 My unreserv'd surrender. To have stain'd  
 By fruitless contest thy triumphant wreaths 355  
 With blood, and spurn'd the bounty of thy hand,  
 Had prov'd ingratitude in me. These words  
 Cecropia's chief return'd: Receive my hand,  
 Thy pledge of freedom here not less secure,  
 Than heretofore at Salamis, thy pledge 360  
 Of bliss yet more endearing. Soon my keel  
 Shall place thee happy on thy native coast,  
 Thee and thy princefs; that in future days

You

Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 133

You may at least of all the Asian breed  
Report my kindness, and forget my sword. 365

Amidst his words a soft complaining trill  
Of Philomela interrupts their sound.  
The youthful satrap then : That pensive bird,  
Sandaucè's warbling summoner, is wont  
In evening shade on Ariana's tomb 370  
To sit and sing ; my princess there devotes  
In melancholy solitude this hour  
To meditation, which dissolves in tears.

Then greet her, said th' Athenian ; thy return  
Will soothe her tender breast. My promise add, 375  
That on the first fair whisper of the winds,  
She shall revisit her maternal soil.

This said, they parted. At her sister's grave  
The satrap join'd his princess. He began :

I have

I have obey'd thy summons. No disgrace 380  
 Was my surrender to the conqu'ring sword,  
 Which Persia long hath felt. Thy servant comes  
 No more a captive, but to thee by choice;  
 Themistocles all bounteous and humane,  
 As heretofore, I find. Forbear to check 385  
 That rising birth of smiles; in perfect light  
 Those half-illuminated eyes attire;  
 Enough the tribute of their tears hath lav'd  
 These precious tombs. Prepare thee to embark;  
 Themistocles hath promis'd thou shalt leave 390  
 A land, whose soaring genius hath depress'd  
 The languid plumes of Asia. Lift thy head  
 In pleasing hope to clasp thy mother's knees,  
 To change thy weeds of mourning, and receive  
 A royal brother's gift, this faithful hand. 395

Nigh Ariana's clay Autarcus slept.  
 Divine Sandaucè on her husband's tomb,

With



Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 135

With marble pomp constructed by the care  
Of Artamanes, fix'd a pensive look  
In silence. Sudden from the cluster'd shrubs, 400  
O'erhanging round it, tuneful all and blithe  
A flight of feather'd warblers, which abound  
Through each Theſſalian vale, in carrol sweet  
Perch on the awful monument. The sun  
Streaks with a parting, but unſully'd ray 405  
Their lively change of plumage, and each rill  
Is ſofter'd by their melody. Accept,  
Accept this omen, Artamanes cries ;  
Autarctus favours, Horomazes ſmiles,  
Whoſe choir of ſongſters not unprompted ſeem  
Our nuptial hymn preluding. She replies : 411

I want no omen to confirm thy truth.  
Duſt of my ſiſter, of my lord, farewell ;  
Secure in Grecian piety remain.  
Still in his offspring will Sandaucè love 415

That

That husband, thou, my Artamanes, still  
Revere that friend. She said, and dropp'd her hand,  
Press'd by the youth. With purity their guide,  
They o'er the mead Sperchēan slowly seek  
Trachinian portals. Phœbe on their heads 420  
Lest fall a spotless canopy of light.

*End of the Twenty-fifth Book.*

THE

# A T H E N A I D.

## BOOK the TWENTY-SIXTH.

**F**ROM her Tithonian couch Aurora mounts  
 The sky. In rev'rence now of Sparta's name,  
 Yet more of dead Leonidas, three days  
 To preparation for his burial rites  
 Themistocles decrees. To curious search 5  
 Innumerable herds and flocks supply  
 Selected victims. Of their hairy pines  
 To frame the stately pyre the hills are shorn.  
 Amid this labour Hyacinthus, rich  
 In Alcadian spoil, his colleague brave 10  
 Nicanor,

Nicanor, all the Potidæan bands,  
 Th' Olynthians, and Nearchus, who conducts  
 The youth of Chalcis, reinforce the camp  
 With their victorious ranks. Th' appointed day  
 Was then arriv'd. A broad constructed pyre 15  
 Tow'rs in the center of Trachiniæ's plain;  
 The diff'rent standards of the Grecian host  
 Are planted round. The Attic chief convenes  
 The fifty Spartans of his guard, and thus:

Themistocles, distinguish'd by your state, 20  
 By your assiduous courage long sustain'd,  
 Will now repay these benefits. Your king,  
 Leonidas, the brightest star of Greece,  
 No more shall wander in the gloom of Styx;  
 But that last passage to immortal seats 25  
 Through me obtain. Greek institutes require  
 The nearest kindred on the fun'ral stage  
 The dead to lay, the victims to dispose,

To



Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 139

To pour libations, and the sacred dust  
Inurn. Alone of these assembled Greeks 30  
Are you the hero's countrymen; alone  
Your hands the pious office shall discharge.

Th' obedient Spartans from Trachiniæ's gates  
Produce to view the venerable bones  
Herculean. Lifted up the structure high 35  
Of pines and cedars, on the surface large  
All, which of great Leonidas remains,  
By sedulous devotion is compos'd.  
The various captains follow, some in gaze  
Of wonder, others weeping. Last appears 40  
Melissa, trailing her pontific pall  
(Calliopè in semblance) with her troop  
Of snowy-vested nymphs from Oeta's hill,  
With all her vassals, decently arrang'd  
By Mycon's care. Two hecatombs are slain, 45  
Of sheep five hundred, and libations pour'd

Of

Of richest wine. A Spartan now applies  
 The ruddy firebrand. In his priestly robe  
 Phœbean Timon supplicates a breeze  
 From Æolus to raise the creeping flame. 50  
 Thrice round the crackling heaps the silent host,  
 With shields revers'd, and spears inclining low,  
 Their solemn movement wind. The shrinking pyre  
 Now glows in embers; fresh libations damp  
 The heat. A vase of silver high-emboss'd, 55  
 By Hyacinthus from Larissa brought,  
 Spoil of th' abode which treach'rous Thorax held,  
 Receives the sacred ashes, and is plac'd  
 Before Melissa. So the godlike son  
 Of Neocles directs. An awful sign 60  
 From her commands attention; thus she spake:

Thou art not dead, Leonidas; thy mind  
 In ev'ry Grecian lives. Thy mortal part,  
 Transform'd to ashes, shall on Oeta's hill

Among

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 141

Among the celebrating Muses dwell 65

In glory; while through animated Greece

Thy virtue's inextinguishable fires

Propitious beam, and, like the flames of Jove,

Intimidate her foes. Not wine, nor oil,

Nor blood of hecatombs, profusely spilt, 70

Can to thy manes pay the tribute due;

The massacre of nations, all the spoil

Of humbled Asia, Destiny hath mark'd

For consecration of thy future tomb.

Two ministers my soul prophetic sees, 75

Themistocles and Aristides stand

Presiding o'er the sacrifice. The earth,

The sea, shall witness to the mighty rites.

Cease to regret the transitory doom

Of thy remains insulted, no disgrace 80

To thee, but Xerxes. Pass, exalted shade,

The bounds of Dis, nor longer wail thy term

Of wand'ring now elaps'd; all measur'd time

Is

Is nothing to eternity. Assume  
 Among the blest's thy everlasting seat. 85  
 Th' indignity, thy earthly frame endur'd,  
 Perhaps the gods permitted in their love  
 To fill the measure of celestial wrath  
 Against thy country's foes; then rest in peace,  
 Thou twice illustrious victim to her weal. 90

As, when Minerva in th' Olympian hall  
 Amid the synod of celestials pour'd  
 Her eloquence and wisdom, ev'ry god  
 In silence heard, and Jove himself approv'd;  
 Around Melissa thus were seen the chiefs 95  
 In admiration bound; o'er all supreme  
 Themistocles applauded. Mycon last,  
 With her injunction charg'd, to Oeta's shrine  
 Was now transporting in their polish'd urn  
 The treasur'd ashes, when along the plain 100  
 A sudden, new appearance strikes the sight,



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A fun'ral car, attended by a troop  
Of olive-bearing mourners. They approach  
Melissa ; suppliant in her view expose  
Embalm'd Masiftius. Sent from Asia's camp, 105  
A passage these had recently obtain'd  
From good Leonteus, by his brother plac'd  
Thermopylæ's sure guard. Melissa knew  
The page Statirus, foremost of the train,  
Who at her feet in agony began: 110

Thy late protector, cold in death's embrace,  
Survey, thou holy paragon ; his fall  
Asopus saw. Before the hero climb'd  
His fatal steed, to me this charge he gave.

“ If I return a conqueror this day, 115  
“ To that excelling dame who made thee mine,  
“ Who hath enlarg'd whate'er of wife and great,  
“ Of just and temp'rate I to nature owe,  
“ Refin'd

“ Refin’d my manners, and my purest thoughts

“ Exalted, I my friendship will prolong 120

“ In gratitude and rev’rence ; blessing heav’n,

“ Which thus prefers Masistius to extend

“ Benevolence to virtue. If I fall,

“ Resume with her the happiest lot my care

“ Can recommend, Statirus. Though no Greek,

“ Her pupil, say, in offices humane 126

“ Hath not been tardy ; by her light inspir’d,

“ He went more perfect to a noble grave.”

Cast from his wounded courser, he, o’erpow’r’d

By numbers, died. The body was restor’d 130

By Aristides, of unrivall’d fame

Among the just and gen’rous. O’er the dead

Mardonius rent his vesture, and his hair,

Then thus ordain’d: “ This precious clay embalm’d

“ To Artamanes bear, whose pious zeal 135

“ A friend’s remains to Sestus will convey,

“ Thence

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“ Thence o’er the narrow Hellespont to reach  
“ His native Asia, and his father’s tomb.”

I then repeated what my virtuous lord,  
Expiring, utter’d: “ Let Mardonius think 140  
“ How brief are life’s enjoyments. Virtue lives  
“ Through all eternity. By virtue earn’d  
“ Praise too is long—Melissa, grant me thine”.

“ Commend me to Melissa, starting, spake  
“ The son of Gobryas. From the shameful cross  
“ Bid Artamanes in her presence free 146  
“ Leonidas the Spartan.” All my charge  
Is now accomplish’d faithfully to all.

Not far was Artamanes. From the train  
Of Persians strode a giant stern in look, 150  
Who thus address’d the satrap: Prince, behold  
Briareus; hither by Mardonius sent,

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Guard of this noble body, I appear  
 A witness too of thy disgrace ; I see  
 These Greeks thy victors. Is th' Athenian chief  
 Among the band ? Themistocles advanc'd ; 156  
 To whom Briareus : Art thou he, who dar'd  
 My lord to battle on the plains of Thebes ?  
 Where have thy fears confin'd thee till this hour  
 That I reproach thee with thy promise pledg'd ? 160  
 But this inglorious enterprize on herds,  
 On flocks, and helpless peasants, was more safe,  
 Than to abide Mardonius in the field.  
 I now return. What tidings shall I bear  
 From thee, great conqueror of beeves and sheep ?

Say, I am safe, Themistocles replies 166  
 In calm derision, and the fun'ral rites,  
 Thus at my leisure, to Laconia's king  
 Perform, while your Mardonius sleeps in Thebes.  
 The spirit of Leonidas, in me 170

Reviving,



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Reviving, shall from Oeta's distant top  
Shake your pavilions on Afopian banks.  
Yet, in return for his recover'd bones,  
I, undisputed master of the main,  
Will waft Masistius to a Persian grave. 175  
Thou mayst depart in safety, as thou cam'st.

The savage hears, and suddenly retreats ;  
While pious Medon thus accosts the dead :

Thou son of honour, to thy promise just,  
Melissa's brother venerates the clay 180  
Of her avow'd protector. Let my care  
Preserve these reliques where no greedy worm,  
Nor hand profane, may violate thy form ;  
Till friendly gales transport thee to repose  
Among thy fathers. Through Trachinian gates  
He leads the fable chariot, thence conveys 186  
Th' illustrious burden to Melissa's roof ;

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Statirus aids. The priestess, there apart,  
 Bespake her brother thus: My tend'rest tears,  
 From public notice painfully conceal'd, 190  
 Shall in thy presence have a lib'ral flow.  
 Thou gav'st me this protector; honour, truth,  
 Humanity, and wisdom like thy own,  
 Were his appendage. Virtue is the same  
 In strangers, kindred, enemies and friends. 195  
 He won my friendship—might in earlier days  
 Have kindled passion—O! since fate decreed  
 Thee from Asopus never to return;  
 If by Melissa's precepts thou inspir'd  
 Didst go more perfect to a noble grave, 200  
 I bless the hours; and memory shall hold  
 Each moment dear, when, list'ning to my voice,  
 Thou sat'st delighted in the moral strain.  
 Leonidas and thou may pass the floods  
 Of Styx together; in your happy groves 205  
 Think of Melissa. Welcom'd were ye both

By

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By her on earth; her tongue shall never cease,  
Her lyre be never wanting to resound  
Thee, pride of Asia, him, the first of Greeks,  
In blended eulogy of grateful song. 210

She o'er the dead through half the solemn night  
A copious web of eloquence unwinds,  
Explaining how Mafistius had consum'd  
Nine lunar cycles in assiduous zeal  
To guard her fane, her vassals to befriend; 215  
How they ador'd his presence; how he won  
Her from the temple to Sandaucè's cure  
At Amarantha's suit; within his tent  
How clemency and justice still abode  
To awe Barbarians; how, departing sad, 220  
His last farewell at Oeta's shrine he gave  
In words like these: "Unrivall'd dame, we march  
"Against thy country—Thou should'st wish our fall.

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“ If we prevail, be confident in me

“ Thy safeguard still—But heav’n, perhaps, ordains  
That thou shalt never want Mafistius more. 226

She pauses. Now her mental pow’rs sublime,  
Collected all, this invocation frame.

O eleutherian fire! this virtuous light,  
By thee extinguish’d, proves thy care of Greece. 230  
Who of the tribes Barbarian now survives  
To draw thy favour? Gratitude requires  
This pure libation of my tears to lave  
Him once my guardian; but a guardian new,  
Thy gift in Medon, elevates at last 235  
My gratitude to thee. Serene she clos’d,  
Embrac’d her brother, and retir’d to rest.

From Oeta’s heights fresh rose the morning breeze.  
A well-apparell’d galley lay unmoor’d

In



Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 151

In readiness to fail. Sandaucè drops 240

A parting tear on kind Meliffa's breast,  
By whom dismiss'd, Statirus on the corse  
Of great Masistius waits. The Grecian chiefs  
Lead Artamanes to the friendly deck,  
In olive wreaths, pacific sign, attir'd, 245  
Whence he the fervour of his bosom pours :

O may this gale with gentleness of breath  
Replace me joyous in my seat of birth,  
As I sincere on Horomazes call  
To send the dove of peace, whose placid wing 250  
The oriental and Hesperian world  
May feel, composing enmity and thirst  
Of mutual havoc! that my grateful roof  
May then admit Themistocles, and all  
Those noble Grecians, who sustain'd my head, 255  
Their captive thrice. But ah! what founts of blood  
Will fate still open to o'erflow the earth!

Yet may your homes inviolate remain,  
 Imparting long the fulness of those joys,  
 Which by your bounty I shall soon possess! 260

He ceas'd. The struggle of SandaUCE's heart  
 Suppress'd her voice. And now the naval pipe  
 Collects the rowers. At the signal shrill  
 They cleave with equal strokes the Malian floods.

Meantime a vessel, underneath the lee 265  
 Of Locris coasting, plies the rapid oar  
 In fight. She veers, and, lodging in her sails  
 The wind transverse, across the haven skims;  
 Till on Sperchēan sands she rests her keel.  
 Themistocles was musing on the turns 270  
 Of human fortune, and the jealous eye  
 Of stern republics, vigilantly bent  
 Against successful greatness; yet serene,  
 Prepar'd for ev'ry possible reverse

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 153

In his own fortune, he the present thought, 275  
Of Persians chang'd from foes to friends, enjoy'd.  
When lo! Sicinus landed. Swift his lord  
In words like these the faithful man approach'd.

From Aristides hail! Asopus flows,  
Still undisturb'd by war, between the hosts 280  
Inactive. Each the other to assail  
Inflexibly their augurs have forbid.  
The camp, which Ceres shall the best supply,  
Will gain the palm. Mardonius then must fight  
To our advantage both of time and place, 285  
Themistocles replies, and sudden calls  
The different leaders round him. Thus he spake :

Eubœans, Delphians, Locrians, you, the chiefs  
Of Potidæa and Olynthus, hear.  
The ritual honours to a hero due, 290  
Whom none e'er equall'd, incomplete are left;

H 5

Them

Them shall the new Aurora see resum'd.

At leisure now three days to solemn games

I dedicate. Amid his num'rous tents

Mardonius on Asopus shall be told, 295

While he sits trembling o'er the hostile flood,

Of Grecian warriors on the Malian sands

Disporting. You in gymnic lifts shall wing

The flying spear, and hurl the massy disk,

Brace on the cæstus, and impel the car 300

To celebrate Leonidas in fight

Of Oeta, witness to his glorious fate.

But fifty vessels deep with laden stores

I first detach, that gen'ral Greece may share

In our superfluous plenty. Want shall waste 305

Mardonian numbers, while profusion flows

Round Aristides. To protect, my friends,

Th' important freight, three thousand warlike spears

Must be embark'd. You, leaders, now decide,

Who



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Who shall with me Thermopylæ maintain, 310

Who join the Grecian camp. First Medon rose:

From thy successful banner to depart  
Believe my feet reluctant. From his cross  
When I deliver'd Lacedæmon's king,  
My life, a boon his friendship once bestow'd,  
I then devoted in the face of heav'n 316

To vindicate his manes. What my joy,

If I survive, if perish, what my praise

To imitate his virtue? Greece demands

In his behalf a sacrifice like this 320

From me, who, dying, only shall discharge

The debt I owe him; where so well discharge,

As at Asopus in the gen'ral flock

Of Greece and Asia? But the hundred spears,

Which have so long accompany'd my steps 325

Through all their wand'rings, are the only force

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My wants require. The rest of Locrian arms  
Shall with Leonteus thy controul obey.

Pois'd on his shield, and cas'd in Carian steel,  
Whence issued lustre like Phœbean rays, 330  
Thus Haliartus: Me, in peasant-weeds,  
Leonidas respected. Though my heart  
Then by unshaken gratitude was bound,  
My humble state could only feel, not act.  
A soldier now, my efforts I must join 335  
With godlike Medon's, to avenge the wrongs  
Of Sparta's king. But first the soldier's skill,  
My recent acquisition, let my arm  
Forever lose, if once my heart forget  
The gen'rous chief, whose service try'd my arm,  
Who made Acanthè mine. My present zeal 341  
His manly justice will forbear to chide.

The priest of Delphi next: Athenian friend,  
I have a daughter on Cadmēan plains,

My

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 157

My Amarantha. From no other care, 345  
Than to be nearer that excelling child,  
Would I forsake this memorable spot,  
Where died the first of Spartans, and a chief  
Like thee triumphant celebrates that death.

Then Cleon proffer'd his Eretrian band, 350  
Eight hundred breathing vengeance on a foe,  
Who laid their tow'rs in ashes. Lampon next  
Presents his Styrians. Brave Nearchus joins  
Twelve hundred youths of Chalcis. Tideus last  
Of Potidæa twice three hundred shields. 355

Enough, your number is complete, the son  
Of Neocles reminds them. Swift embark ;  
The gale invites. Sicinus is your guide.

He said, and, moving tow'rd the beach, observes  
The embarkation. Each progressive keel 360  
His eye pursues. O'er swelling now in thought,  
His

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His own deservings, glory and success,  
 Rush on his soul like torrents, which disturb  
 A limpid fount. Of purity depriv'd,  
 The rill no more in music steals along, 365  
 But harsh and turbid through its channel foams.

What sea, what coast, what region have I pass'd  
 Without erecting trophies, cries the chief  
 In exultation to Sicinus staid?  
 Have I not spar'd the vanquish'd to resound 370  
 My clemency? Ev'n Persians are my friends.  
 These are my warriors. Prosp'rous be your sails,  
 Ye Greeks, enroll'd by me, by me inur'd  
 To arms and conquest. Under Fortune's wing  
 Speed, and assist my ancient rival's arm 375  
 To crush th' invader. Distant I uphold  
 The Grecian armies; distant I will snatch  
 My share of laurels on the plains of Thebes.  
 Then come, soft peace, of indolence the nurse,  
 Not



Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 159

Not to the son of Neocles. On gold 380

Let rigour look contemptuous ; I, return'd  
To desert Athens, I, enrich'd with spoils  
Of potentates, and kings, will raise her head  
From dust. Superb her structures shall proclaim  
No less a marvel, than the matchless bird 385

The glory of Arabia, when, consum'd  
In burning frankincense and myrrh, he shews  
His presence new, and, op'ning to the sun  
Regenerated gloss of plumage, tow'rs,  
Himself a species. So shall Athens rise 390  
Bright from her ashes, mistress sole of Greece.

From long Piræan walls her winged pow'r  
Shall awe the Orient, and Hesperian worlds.  
Me shall th' Olympic festival admit  
Its spectacle most splendid . . . Ah ! suppress 395

Immod'rate thoughts, Sicinus interrupts,  
Thou citizen of Athens ! Who aspires,  
Resides not there secure. Forbear to sting

Her

Her ever-wakeful jealousy, nor tempt  
 The woes of exile. For excess of worth 400  
 Was Aristides banish'd. Be not driv'n  
 To early trial of thy Persian friends.  
 O! thou transcendent, thou stupendous man,  
 From thy Timothea moderation learn,  
 Which, like the stealing touch of gentle time 405  
 O'er canvass, pencil'd by excelling art,  
 Smooths glaring colours, and imparts a grace  
 To mightiest heroes. Thus their dazzling blaze  
 Of glory soft'ning, softens envy's eye.

*End of the Twenty-sixth Book.*

THE

## A T H E N A I D.

## BOOK the TWENTY-SEVENTH.

**M**EANTIME Briareus to the plains of Thebes  
 Precipitates his course. Arriv'd, he greets  
 Mardonius. Rumour had already told,  
 What, now confirm'd, o'erwhelms the troubled chief,  
 Confounded like the first anointed king 5  
 O'er Israel's tribes, when Philistean din  
 Of armies pierc'd his borders, and despair  
 Seduc'd his languid spirit to consult  
 The forcerefs of Endor. Call, he said,  
 Elëan Hegesistratus—Be swift.

10

The

Her ever-wakeful jealousy, nor tempt  
 The woes of exile. For excess of worth 400  
 Was Aristides banish'd. Be not driv'n  
 To early trial of thy Persian friends.  
 O! thou transcendent, thou stupendous man,  
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THE  
ATHENAID.

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The forcerefs of Endor. Call, he said,  
Elean Hegesistratus—Be fwift.

10  
The

The summon'd augur comes. To him the son  
 Of Gobryas: Foe to Sparta, heed my words;  
 Themistocles possesses on our backs  
 Th' Oetæan passes. Famine, like a beast,  
 Noos'd and subservient to that fraudulent man, 15  
 Who shuns the promis'd contest in the field,  
 He can turn loose against us. In our front  
 See Aristides. Fatal is delay.  
 Fam'd are the oracles of Greece—Alas!  
 My oracle, Mafistius, is no more. 20  
 To thee, who hatest all the Spartan breed,  
 I trust my secret purpose. Be my guide  
 To some near temple, or mysterious cave,  
 Whence voices supernatural unfold  
 The destinies of men. The augur here: 25

The nearest, but most awful, is a cave  
 Oracular, Lebadia's ancient boast,  
 Where Jupiter Trophonius is ador'd,

Not

Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 163

Not far beyond Copææ's neighb'ring lake,  
Which thou must pass. With costly presents freight,  
Such as magnificence like thine requires, 31  
Thy loaded bark; command my service all.

Mardonius issues orders to provide  
The bark and presents. Summoning his chiefs,  
To them he spake: My absence from the camp 35  
Important functions claim; three days of rule  
To Mindarus I cede. Till my return  
Let not a squadron pass th' Asopian stream.

This said, with Hegesistratus he mounts  
A rapid car. Twelve giants of his guard,  
Detach'd before, await him on the banks  
Of clear Copææ. Silver Phœbè spreads  
A light, reposing on the quiet lake,  
Save where the snowy rival of her hue,  
The gliding swan, behind him leaves a trail 45  
In

In luminous vibration. Lo! an isle  
 Swells on the surface. Marble structures there  
 New gloss of beauty borrow from the moon  
 To deck the shore. Now silence gently yields  
 To measur'd strokes of oars. The orange groves, 50  
 In rich profusion round the fertile verge,  
 Impart to fanning breezes fresh perfumes  
 Exhaustless, visiting the sense with sweets,  
 Which soften ev'n Briareus; but the son  
 Of Gobryas, heavy with devouring care, 55  
 Uncharm'd, unheeding sits. At length began  
 Th' Elëan augur, in a learned flow  
 Of ancient lore, to Asia's pensive chief  
 Historically thus: Illustrious lord,  
 Whose nod controuls such multitudes in arms 60  
 From lands remote and near, the story learn  
 Of sage Trophonius, whose prophetic cell  
 Thou wouldst descend. An architect divine,  
 He for the Delphians rais'd their Pythian fane.

His



Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 165

His recompense imploring from the god, 65

This gracious answer from the god he drew :

“ When thrice my chariot hath its circle run,

“ The prime reward, a mortal can obtain,

“ Trophonius, shall be thine.” Apollo thrice

His circle ran ; behold Trophonius dead. 70

With prophecy his spirit was endu’d,

But where abiding in concealment long

The destinies envelop’d. Lo ! a dearth

Afflicts Bœotia. Messengers address

The Delphian pow’r for succour. He enjoins 75

Their care throughout Lebadian tracts to seek

Oracular Trophonius. Long they roam

In fruitless search ; at last a honey’d swarm

Before them flies ; they follow, and attain

A cave. Their leader enters, when a voice, 80

Revealing there the deity, suggests

Cure to their wants, and knowledge of his will

How to be worshipp’d in succeeding times.

To

To him the name of Jupiter is giv'n.

He to the fatal sisters hath access; 85

Sees Clotho's awful distaff; sees the thread

Of human life by Lachesis thence drawn;

Sees Atropos divide, with direful shears,

The slender line. But rueful is the mode

Of consultation, though from peril free, 90

Within his dreary cell. In thy behalf

Thou mayst a faithful substitute appoint.

By Horomazes, no, exclaims the chief!

It is the cause of empire, from his post

Compels the Persian leader; none but he 95

Shall with your god confer. Transactions past

To Hegesistratus he now details,

His heart unfolding, nor conceals th' event

In Asia's camp, when Aemnestus bold,

The Spartan legate, prompted, as by heav'n, 100

Him singled out the victim to atone

Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 167

The death of Sparta's king. Their changing course  
Of navigation now suspends their words.

Against the influx of Cephissus, down

Lebadian vales in limpid flow convey'd, 105

The rowers now are lab'ring. O'er their heads

Hedge alders weave their canopies, and shed

Disparted moonlight through the lattic'd boughs ;

Where Zephyr plays, and whisp'ring motion breathes

Among the pliant leaves. Now roseate tincts 110

Begin to streak the orient verge of heav'n,

Foretok'ning day. The son of Gobryas lands,

Where in soft murmur down a channell'd slope

The stream Hercyna, from Trophonian groves,

Fresh bubbling meets Cephissus. He ascends 115

With all his train. Th' inclosure, which begirds

The holy purlieus, through a portal, hung

With double valves on obelisks of stone,

Access afforded to the steps of none

But

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But suppliants. Hegesistratus accosts 120

One in pontific vesture station'd there:

Priest of Bœotia's oracle most fam'd,  
 Dismiss all fear. Thy country's guardian hail,  
 This mighty prince, Mardonius. He preserves  
 Inviolat her fanes; her willing spears 125  
 All range beneath his standards. To confer  
 With your Trophonius, lo! he comes with gifts,  
 Surpassing all your treasur'd wealth can boast.  
 His hours are precious, nor admit delay;  
 Accept his sumptuous off'rings, and commence 130  
 The ceremonials due. At first aghast  
 The holy man survey'd the giant guard.  
 Soon admiration follow'd at thy form,  
 Mardonius. Low in stature, if compar'd  
 With those unshapen savages, sublime 135  
 Thou trod'st in majesty of mien, and grace  
 Of just proportion. Last the gems and gold,  
 Bright



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Bright vases, tripods, images and crowns,  
The presents borne by those gigantic hands,  
With fascinating lustre fix'd the priest 140  
To gaze unsated on the copious store.

Pass through, but unaccompany'd, he said,  
Illustrious Persian. Be th' accepted gifts  
Deposited within these holy gates.

He leads the satrap to a grassy mount, 145  
Distinct with scatter'd plantains. Each extends  
O'er the smooth green his mantle brown of shade.  
Of marble white an edifice rotund,  
In all th' attractive elegance of art,  
Looks from the summit, and invites the feet. 150  
Of wond'ring strangers to ascend. The prince,  
By his conductor, is instructed thus:

Observe yon dome. Thou first must enter there  
Alone, there fervent in devotion bow

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Before two statues; one of Genius good, 155  
Of Fortune fair the other. At the word  
Mardonius enters. Chance directs his eye  
To that expressive form of Genius good,  
Whose gracious lineaments, sedately sweet,  
Recall Masistius to the gloomy chief. 160

O melancholy! who can give thee praise?  
Not sure the gentle; them thy weight o'erwhelms.  
But thou art wholesome to intemp'rate minds;  
In vain by wisdom caution'd. In the pool  
Of black adversity let them be steep'd, 165  
Then pride, and lust, and fury thou dost tame.  
So now Mardonius, by thy pow'r a enthral'd,  
Sighs in these words humility of grief.

If heav'n, relenting, will to me assign  
A Genius good, he bears no other name 170  
Than of Masistius. Oh! thou spirit blest'd,

(For

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(For sure thy virtue dwells with endless peace)

Canst thou, her seat relinquishing awhile,

Unseen, or visible, protect thy friend

In this momentous crisis of his fate; 175

Or wilt thou, if permitted? Ah! no more

Think of Mardonius fierce, ambitious, proud,

But as corrected by thy precepts mild;

Who would forego his warmest hopes of fame,

Of pow'r and splendour, gladly to expire, 180

If so the myriads trusted to his charge

He might preserve, nor leave whole nations fall'n,

A prey to vultures on these hostile plains.

Come, and be witness to the tears which flow,

Sure tokens of sincerity in me, 185

Not us'd to weep; who, humbled at thy loss,

Melt like a maiden, of her love bereav'd

By unrelenting death. My demon kind,

Do thou descend, and Fortune will pursue

Spontaneous and auspicious on her wheel 190



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A track unchang'd. Here turning, he adores  
Her flatt'ring figure, and forsakes the dome.

Along Hercyna's bank they now proceed,  
To where the river parts. One channel holds  
A sluggish, creeping water, under vaults 195  
Of ebon shade, and soporific yew,  
The growth of ages on the level line  
Of either joyless verge. The satrap here,  
Nam'd and presented by his former guide,  
A second priest receives, conductor new 200  
Through night-resembling shadows, which obscure  
The sleepy stream, unmoving to the sight,  
Or moving mute. A fountain they approach,  
One of Hercyna's sources. From the pores  
Of spongy rock an artificial vase 205  
Of jetty marble in its round collects  
The slow-distilling moisture. Hence the priest  
A brimming



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A brimming chalice to Mardonius bears,  
Whom in these words he solemnly accosts:

This fount is nam'd of Lethè. Who consults  
Our subterranean deity, must quaff 211  
Oblivion here of all preceding thoughts,  
Sensations, and affections. Reach the draught;  
If such oblivious sweets this cup contains,  
I gladly grasp it, cries the chief, and drinks. 215

Ascending thence, a mazy walk they tread,  
Where all the season's florid children shew  
Their gorgeous rayment, and their odours breathe  
Unspent; while musical in murmur flows  
Fast down a steep declivity of bed 220  
Hercyna, winding in a channel new,  
Apparent often to the glancing eye  
Through apertures, which pierce the loaden boughs

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Of golden fruit Hesperian, and th' attire  
Of myrtles green, o'ershadowing the banks. 225

In alabaster's variegated hues,  
To bound the pleasing avenue, a fane  
Its symmetry discover'd on a plat,  
Thick-set with roses, which a circling skreen  
Of that fair ash, where cluster'd berries glow, 230  
From ruffling gusts defended. Thither speeds  
Mardonius, there deliver'd to a third  
Religious minister supreme. Two youths,  
In snow-like vesture, and of lib'ral mien,  
Sons of Lebadian citizens, attend, 235  
Entit'led Mercuries. The seer address'd  
The Persian warrior: In this mansion pure  
Mnemofynè is worshipp'd; so in Greece  
The pow'r of memory is styl'd. Advance,  
Invoke her aid propitious to retain 240  
Whate'er by sounds, or visions, in his cave

The

The prophet god reveals. The chief comply'd;  
The hallow'd image he approach'd, and spake:

Thou art indeed a goddess, I revere.

Now to Mardonius, if some dream or sign      245  
Prognosticate success, and thou imprint  
The admonitions of unerring heav'n  
In his retentive mind; this arm, this sword  
Shall win thy further favour to record  
His name and glory on the rolls of time.      250

This said, with lighter steps he quits the fane.  
The Mercuries conduct him to a bath,  
Fed from Hercyna's fairer, second source,  
In shade sequester'd close. While there his limbs  
Are disarray'd of armour, to assume      255  
A civil garment, soon as spotless streams  
Have purify'd his frame; the priest, who stands  
Without, in ecstacy of joy remarks



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The rich Mardonian off'rings on their way,  
 By servitors transported to enlarge 260  
 The holy treasure. Instant he prepares  
 For sacrifice. A fable ram is slain.

Fresh from ablution, lo! Mardonius comes  
 In linen vesture, fine and white, as down  
 Of Paphian doves. A sash of tincture bright, 265  
 Which rivall'd Flora's brilliancy of dye,  
 Engirds his loins; majestic his brows  
 A wreath sustain; Lebadian sandals ease  
 His steps. Exchanging thus his martial guise,  
 Like some immortal, of a gentler mold 270  
 Than Mars, he moves. So Phœbus, when he sets,  
 Lav'd by the nymphs of Tethys in their grot  
 Of coral after his diurnal toil,  
 Repairs his splendours, and his rosy track  
 Of morn resumes. With partial eyes the priest  
 Explores the victim's entrails, and reports 276  
 Each



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Each sign auspicious with a willing tongue ;  
Then to Mardonius : Thee, Bœotia's friend,  
Magnificently pious to her gods,  
Thee I pronounce a votary approv'd 280  
By this Bœotian deity. Now seek  
In confidence the cavern. But the rites  
Demand, that first an image thou approach,  
Which none, but those in purity of garb,  
None, but accepted suppliants of the god, 285  
Can lawfully behold. Above the bath  
A rock was hollow'd to an ample space ;  
Thence issued bubbling waters. See, he said,  
The main Hercynian fount, whose face reflects  
Yon Dædalæan workmanship, the form 290  
Trophonius bears. Adore that rev'rend beard,  
The twisted serpents round that awful staff,  
Those looks, which pierce the mysteries of fate.

Next through a winding cavity and vast  
He guides the prince along a mossy vault, 295

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Rough with protuberant and tortuous roots  
 Of ancient woods, which, clothing all above,  
 In depth shoot downward equal to their height;  
 Suspended lamps, with livid glympse and faint,  
 Direct their darkling passage. Now they reach 300  
 The further mouth unclosing in a dale  
 Abrupt; there shadow, never-fleeting, rests.  
 Rude-featur'd crags, o'erhanging, thence expel  
 The blaze of noon. Beneath a frowning cliff  
 A native arch, of altitude which tempts 305  
 The soaring eagle to construct his nest,  
 Expands before an excavation deep,  
 Unbowelling the hill. On either side  
 This gate of nature, hoary fons of time,  
 Enlarg'd by ages to protentious growth, 310  
 Impenetrable yews augment the gloom.

In height two cubits, on the rocky floor  
 A parapet was rais'd of marble white,

In circular dimension; this upholds  
 The weight of polish'd obelisks, by zones 315  
 Of brass connected, ornamental fence.  
 A wicket opens to th' advancing prince;  
 Steps moveable th' attentive priest supplies;  
 By whom instructed, to the awful chasm  
 Below, profound but narrow, where the god 320  
 His inspiration breathes, th' intrepid son  
 Of Gobryas firm descends. His nether limbs  
 Up to the loins he plunges. Downward drawn,  
 As by a whirlpool of some rapid flood,  
 At once the body is from sight conceal'd. 325  
 Entranc'd he lies in subterranean gloom,  
 Less dark than superstition. She, who caus'd  
 His bold adventure, with her wonted fumes  
 Of perturbation from his torpid state  
 Awakes him; rather in a dream suggests 330  
 That he is waking. On a naked bank  
 He seems to stand; before him sleeps a pool,



Edg'd round by desert mountains, in their height  
 Obscuring heav'n. Without impulsive oars,  
 Without a sail, spontaneous flies a bark 335  
 Above the stagnant surface, which, untouch'd,  
 Maintains its silence. On the margin rests  
 The skiff, presenting to the hero's view  
 An aged fire, of penetrating ken,  
 His weight inclining on an ebon staff, 340  
 With serpents wreath'd, who, beck'ning, thus began:

If, feed of Gobryas, thou wouldst know thy fate,  
 Embark with me; Trophonius I am call'd.

Th' undaunted chief obeys. In flight more swift  
 Than eagles, swiftest of the feather'd kind, 345  
 Th' unmoving water's central spot they gain.  
 At once its bosom opens; down they sink  
 In depth to equal that immane descent  
 Of Hercules to Pluto, yet perform,

As



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As in a moment, their portentous way. 350

Around, above, the liquid mass retires;

In concave huge suspended; nor bedews

Their limbs, or garments. Two stupendous valves

Of adamant o'er half the bottom spread ;

Them with his mystic rod the prophet smites. 355

Self-listed, they a spacious grot expose,

Whose pointed spar is tipt with dancing light;

Beyond Phœbean clear. The Persian looks ;

Intelligent he looks. Words, names and things,

Recurring, gather on his anxious mind ; 360

When he, who seems Trophonius: Down this cave

None, but the gods oracular, may pass.

Here dwell the fatal Sisters ; at their toil

The Destinies thou see'st. The thread new-drawn

Is thine, Mardonius. Instantly a voice, 365

Which shakes the grot, and all the concave round,

Sounds Aemnestus. Swift the direful shears

The line dis sever, and Mardonius, whirl'd

Back

Back from Trophonian gloom, is found supine  
 Within the marble parapet, which fenc'd 370  
 The cavern's mouth. The watchful priest conducts  
 The agitated satrap, mute and sad,  
 Back to Mnemosynè's abode. His eyes  
 Are sternly fix'd. Now, prince, the seer began,  
 Divulge, whatever thou hast heard and seen 375  
 Before this goddess. Priest, he said, suspend  
 Thy function now importunate. Remove.

The seer withdrawn, the Persian thus alone:  
 Then be it so. To luxury and pow'r,  
 Magnificence and pleasure, I must bid 380  
 Farewell. Leonidas let Greece extol,  
 Me too shall Persia. Goddess, to thy charge  
 A name, so dearly purchas'd, I consign.

This said, in haste his armour he resumes.  
 Not as Leonidas compos'd, yet brave 385

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Amid the gloom of trouble, he prefers  
Death to dishonour. O'er the holy ground  
He pensive treads, a parallel to Saul,  
Return'd from Endor's necromantic cell  
In sadness, still magnanimously firm 390  
Ne'er to survive his dignity, but face  
Predicted ruin, and, in battle slain,  
Preserve his fame. Mardonius finds the gates;  
His friends rejoins; glides down Cephissian floods;  
Copæ's lake repasses; and is lodg'd 395  
In his own tent by midnight. Sullen there  
He sits; disturb'd, he shuns repose; access  
Forbids to all: but Lamachus intrudes,  
Nefarious counsellor, in fell device  
Surpassing fellest tyrants. Now hath night 400  
Upcall'd her clouds, black signal for the winds  
To burst their dungeons; cataracts of rain  
Mix with blue fires; th' ethereal concave groans;

Stern



Stern looks Mardonius on the daring Greek,  
 Who, in his wiles confiding, thus began: 405

Supreme o'er nations numberless in arms,  
 Sole hope of Asia, thy return I greet  
 With joy. Thy absence hath employ'd my soul  
 To meditate the means, the certain means  
 For thee to prosper. Lo! the active son 410  
 Of Neocles, who keeps th' Oetæan pass,  
 Lo! Aristides in the camp of Greece,  
 Remain thy only obstacles. Her pow'r,  
 Of them depriv'd, would moulder and disperse,  
 Devoid of counsel, with an edgless sword. 415  
 Uncommon danger stimulates the wife  
 To search for safety through uncommon paths,  
 Much more, when pow'r, when empire and renown,  
 Hang on a crisis. If a serpent's guile  
 Behind the pillows of such foes might lurk; 420  
 If darting thence, his unsuspected sting

Might.



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Might pierce their bosoms; if the ambient air  
Could by mysterious alchymy be chang'd  
To viewless poison, and their cups infect  
With death; such help would policy disdain? 425  
Hast thou not hardy and devoted slaves?  
Try their fidelity and zeal. No life  
Can be secure against a daring hand.  
Two Grecian deaths confirm thee lord of Greece.

He ceas'd, expecting praise; but honour burns  
Fierce in the satrap's elevated soul: 431

Dar'st thou suggest such baseness to the son  
Of Gobryas? furious he exalts his voice;  
Guards, seize and strangle this pernicious wolf.

Time but to wonder at his sudden fate 435  
The ready guards afford him, and the wretch  
Fit retribution for his crimes receives.

This

This act of eastern equity expels  
 The satrap's gloom. Now, Grecian gods, he cries,  
 Smile on my justice. From th' assassin's point 440  
 I guard your heroes. By yourselves I swear,  
 My preservation, or success, assur'd  
 By such unmanly turpitude I spurn.

His mind is cheer'd. A tender warmth succeeds,  
 Predominant in am'rous, eastern hearts, 445  
 A balm to grief, and victor mild of rage.

The midnight hour was past, a season dear  
 To softly-tripping Venus. Through a range  
 Of watchful eunuchs in apartments gay  
 He seeks the female quarter of his tent, 450  
 Which, like a palace of extent superb,  
 Spreads on the field magnificence. Soft lutes,  
 By snowy fingers touch'd, sweet-warbled song  
 From ruby lips, which harmonize the air

Impregnated

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Impregnated with rich Panchæan scents, 455  
Salute him ent'ring. Gentle hands unclasp  
His martial harness, in a tepid bath  
Lave and perfume his much-enduring limbs.  
A couch is strewn with roses; he reclines  
In thinly-woven Taffeta. So long 460  
In pond'rous armour cas'd, he scarcely feels  
The light and loose attire. Around him smile  
Circassian Graces, and the blooming flow'rs  
Of beauty cull'd from ev'ry clime to charm.  
Lo! in transcending ornament of dress 465  
A fair-one all-surpassing greets the chief;  
But pale her lip, and wild her brilliant eye:

Nam'd from Bethulia, where I drew my breath,  
I, by a father's indigence betray'd,  
Became thy slave; yet noble my descent 470  
From Judith ever-fam'd, whose beauty fav'd  
Her native place. Indignant I withstood

Thy



Thy passion. Gentle still a master's right  
 Thou didst forbear, and my reluctant charms 474  
 Leave unprophan'd by force. Repuls'd, thy love  
 Grew cold. Too late contemplating thy worth,  
 I felt a growing flame, but ne'er again  
 Could win thy favour. In the Haram's round  
 Disconsolate, neglected, I have walk'd;  
 Have seen my gay companions to thy arms 480  
 Preferr'd, professing passion far unlike  
 To mine, Mardonius. Now despair suggests  
 To give thee proof of undiffembled truth,  
 Which no neglect hath cool'd. To thy success,  
 Thy glory, my virginity is vow'd. 485  
 In this bright raiment, with collected pow'rs  
 Of beauty, I at Aristides' feet  
 Will throw me prostrate. To th' alluring face  
 Of my progenitrix a victim fell  
 Th' Assyrian captain, Holofernes proud; 490



So shall thy foe of Athens fall by mine.

74

The meritorious and heroic deed

Soon will erase the transitory stain.

O! if successful, let Bethulia hope

For thy reviving love. Mardonius starts 495

In dubious trouble. Whether to chastise

So fierce a spirit, or its zeal admire,

80

He hesitates. Compassion for the sex

At length prevails, suggesting this reply:

Fell magnanimity! enormous proof 500

Of such intemp'rate passion! I forgive

85

While I reject thy proffer'd crime, although

The deed might fix my glory and success;

And in return for thy prepos'trous love

Will safe replace thee in thy native seat 505

With gifts to raise from indigence thy house.

90

But never, never from this hour will view

So

Thy

Thy face again, Bethulia. Eunuchs, hear ;  
Remove, conceal this woman from my sight.

No, thou inhuman, thus Bethulia wild: 510  
This shall remove for ever from thy sight  
A woman scorn'd, and terminate her pains.

She said, and struck a poniard through her heart.  
With shrieks the Haram sounds ; th' afflicted fair,  
The eunuchs shudder ; when the satrap thus :

Is this another black portent of ill, 516  
Stern Horomazes ? or is this my crime ?  
No, thou art just. My conscious spirit feels  
Thy approbation of Mardonius now.

But from his breast the dire event expels 520  
All soft and am'rous cares. His vast command,  
His

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His long inaction, and the dread of shame  
Recur. He quits the chamber; to his own  
Repairing, summons Mindarus, and firm  
In aspect speaks: The morning soon will dawn. 525  
Draw down our slingers, archers, and the skill'd  
In flying darts to line th' Afopian brink;  
Thence gall the Grecians, whose diurnal wants  
That flood relieves. Then Mindarus: O chief,  
This instant sure intelligence is brought, 530  
That from the isthmus, to supply their camp,  
A convoy, rich in plenty, is descry'd  
Advancing tow'rd's Cithæron's neighb'ring pass.

Mardonius quick: No moment shall be lost.  
Bid Tiridates with five thousand horse 535  
Possess that pass, and, pouring on the plain,  
Secure the precious store. This said, he seeks  
A short repose, and Mindarus withdraws.

In



In arms anon to paragon the morn,  
 The morn new-rising, whose vermillion hand 540  
 Draws from the bright'ning front of heav'n serene  
 The humid curtains of tempestuous night,  
 Mardonius mounts his courser. On his bank  
 The godlike figure soon Asopus views.

*End of the Twenty-seventh Book.*



THE

## A T H E N A I D.

## BOOK the TWENTY-EIGHTH.

**W**HILE lamentation for Masistius dead  
 Depress'd the Persians, undisturb'd the Greeks  
 To all their camp refreshment had deriv'd  
 From clear Asopus. To th' accusom'd edge  
 Of his abounding flood they now resort. 5  
 Stones, darts and arrows from unnumber'd ranks,  
 Along the margin opposite dispos'd  
 By Mindarus, forbid access. Repulse  
 Disbands the Greeks. Exulting, he forgets  
 Cleora; active valour in his breast 10

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K

Extinguishes

Extinguishes the embers, cherish'd long  
 By self-tormenting memory, and warmth  
 Of fruitless passion. Present too his chief,  
 His friend and kinsman, from a fiery steed  
 Mardonius rules and stimulates the fight, 15  
 Like Boreas, riding on a stormy cloud,  
 Whence issue darts of light'ning, mix'd with hail  
 In rattling show'rs. The enemies dispers'd,  
 Embolden Mindarus to ford the stream.  
 In guidance swift of cavalry expert, 20  
 With unresisted squadrons he careers  
 Along the field. Inviolable the flood  
 He guards; each hostile quarter he insults.

Now Gobryas' son, unfetter'd from the bonds  
 Of superstitious terrors, joyful sees 25  
 In Mindarus a new Masistius rise;  
 Nor less the tidings Tiridates sends,  
 Who in Cithæron's passes hath despoil'd

The

The slaughter'd foes, inspire the gen'ral's thoughts,  
Which teem with arduous enterprize. The camp 30  
He empties all; beneath whose forming host  
The meadow sounds. The native Persians face  
Laconia's station, Greek allies oppose  
Th' Athenian. All the force of Thebes array'd  
Envenom'd Leontiades commands. 35

Greece in her lines sits tranquil; either host  
Expects the other. By their augurs still  
Restrain'd, they shun the interdicted ford.  
But of the river's plenteous stream depriv'd  
By Mindarus, the Grecians fear a dearth 40  
Of that all-cheering element. A rill  
Flows from a distant spring, Gargaphia nam'd,  
Their sole resource. Nor dread of other wants  
Afflicts them less; their convoy is o'erpow'r'd  
By Tiridates. Anxious all exhaust 45  
A night disturb'd; the bravest grieve the most,



Left through severe necessity they quit  
 Inglorious their position. Morning shines ;  
 When frequent signals from th' external guards,  
 Near and remote, successive rise. To arms 50  
 All rush. Along the spacious public way  
 From Megara, obscuring dust ascends.  
 The sound of trampling hoofs, and laden wheels,  
 With shouts of multitude, is heard. Behold,  
 Forth from the cloud, a messenger of joy, 55  
 Sicinus breaks, of bold auxiliar bands  
 Forerunner swift, and unexpected aid  
 In copious stores, at Megara's wide port  
 New-landed from Thermopylæ. The camp  
 Admits, and hails in rapturous acclaim 60  
 Eubœan standards, Potidæa's ranks,  
 The laurell'd priest and hero, Timon sage,  
 Th' ennobled heir of Lygdamis, and thee,  
 Melissa's brother, great Oileus' son,  
 Friend of Leonidas, thee dear to all, 65

O brave,



Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 197

O brave, and gen'rous Medon! From their tents  
The chiefs assemble, when Sicinus spake:

Pausanius, gen'ral of united Greece,  
Accept these ample succours from the hand  
Of provident Themistocles: Possess'd 70  
Of Oeta's passes, he the Persian host  
Now with impenetrable toils besets  
Like beasts of prey, entangled by the skill  
Of some experienc'd hunter. Thou receive,  
Just Aristides, from Timothea's love, 75  
A suit of armour new, in Chalcis fram'd,  
Without luxuriant ornament, or gold.  
The shield, an emblem of thy soul, displays  
Truth, equity and wisdom, hand in hand.  
This for her children, and thy own, consign'd, 80  
To her Eubœan roof and pious care,  
She bids thee lift and conquer. Thou restore  
The little exiles in their native homes

To dwell in peace. Her gift, she adds, derives  
 Its only value from the wearer's worth. 85

In smiles, like Saturn at the tribute pure  
 Of fruits and flow'rs in singleness of heart  
 Paid by religion of the golden age,  
 Timothea's gift the righteous man receives,  
 Not righteous more than practis'd to endure 90  
 Heroic labours, soon by matchless deeds  
 To justify the giver. He began:

Confederated warriors, who withstand  
 A tyrant's pow'r, unanimous confess  
 Your debt to great Themistocles, the lord 95  
 Of all-admir'd Timothea. He and I  
 Evince the fruits of concord. Ancient foes,  
 Through her united, cheerful we sustain  
 Our public charge. From gen'ral union Greece  
 Expects her safety. Him success hath crown'd 100

In

Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 199

In arms and counsel; whether on the main  
His naval flag he spread, or shook the land  
With his triumphant step. O, hero-born  
Pausanias! glowing with Herculean blood,  
Now under thee let Aristides hope 105  
To share success, nor tarnish with disgrace  
His armour new. Behold, yon river gleams  
With hostile arms. Those standards on the left,  
Well-known to Attic eyes, are proudly borne  
By native Medes and Persians. Treach'rous Thebes  
Lifts her Cadmēan banner on the right. 111  
A second time Mardonius forms his host  
To proffer battle. He, perhaps, may ford  
Asopus, which Tisamenus, the learn'd  
In divination, hath forbid our steps 115  
To pass. Thy former numbers swift arrange.  
New from a march let these auxiliars guard  
The camp. To him Pausanias thus apart:



Athenian, hear: Your citizens are vers'd  
 In this Barbarian warfare, yet unknown 120  
 To us. Let Spartans and Athenians change  
 Their station. You, an adversary try'd  
 At Marathon, and foil'd, will best oppose.  
 To vanquish Grecians we accustom'd long  
 Will yon Bœotians and Thessalians face. 125  
 Such is my will. Concise the Attic sage:

Thou hast commanded what my willing thoughts  
 Themselves devis'd, but waited first to hear.  
 Well canst thou fight, Pausanias. I will strive  
 To imitate thy deeds and thy renown, 130  
 On whose increase our liberty and laws  
 Depend. This said, they part. Behind the rear  
 Soon from the left th' Athenians, from the right  
 The Spartans file. Their stations they exchange,  
 Not by Mardonius unperceiv'd. He moves 135  
 His Medes and Persians to the post of Thebes,

Whence



Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 201

Whence still the Spartan phalanx they confront,  
The Thebans still th' Athenian. This observ'd,  
Pausanias swift to Aristides sends  
Strict charge his old position to resume. 140

Now indignation high through all the tribes  
Of Athens rages. Noble pride, and sense  
Of just desert, in exclamation fierce  
Break from th' exalted populace, who claim  
Their soil for parent. Gods! from wing to wing  
Must we like servile mercenary bands, 146  
Like Helots, slaves to Lacedæmon born,  
Be hurry'd thus obsequious to controul  
From an imperious Spartan? Tegea first  
Contested our prerogative. The pride 150  
Of Sparta next removes us from the post,  
Assign'd by public judgment; we comply.  
Must we at her contemptuous nod resume  
The station we forsook? Defending Greece,

Ourself meanwhile deserted and betray'd, 155

Twice have we lost our city. What is left

Of our abandon'd residence, but dust?

Let Greece defend herself. Let us remove

For the last time our standards, hoist our sails,

Our floating empire fix on distant shores, 160

Our household gods, our progeny, and name,

On some new soil establish, sure to find

None so ingrate as this. The Athenians thus

Swell with ingenuous ire, as ocean boils,

Disturb'd by Eurys, and the rude career 165

Of Boreas, threat'ning furious to surmount

All circumscription. But as oft a cloud,

Distilling gentle moisture as it glides,

Dissolves the rigour of their boist'rous wings,

Till o'er the main serenity returns; 170

So from the mouth of Aristides fall

Composing words. Insensibly he soothes

Their justly-irritated minds, and calms

Their

Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 203

Their just resentment. Righteousness and truth,  
How prevalent your efforts, when apply'd 175  
By placid wisdom! In these strains he spake:

Ye men of Athens, at Laconia's call  
To meet the flow'r of Asia's host in fight  
Do ye repine? A station, which implies  
Pre-eminence of Attic worth, a task 180  
Of all most glorious, which the martial race  
Of Sparta shuns, and you should covet most,  
Ye Marathonian victors? In the fight  
Of Greece, who trembles at a Median garb,  
You are preferr'd for valour. Arms the same, 185  
The same embroider'd vestment on their limbs  
Effeminate, the same unmanly souls,  
Debas'd by vices and monarchical rule,  
The Medes retain, as when their vanquish'd ranks  
Fled heretofore. With weapons often try'd, 190

K:6 With.



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With confidence by victories increas'd,  
 Not now for liberty and Greece alone  
 You march to battle; but to keep unspoil'd  
 Your trophies won already, and the name,  
 Which Marathon and Salamis have rais'd, 195  
 Preserve unstain'd; that men may ever say,  
 Not through your leaders, not by fortune there  
 You triumph'd, but by fortitude innate,  
 And lib'ral vigour of Athenian blood.

He said and march'd. All follow mute through  
 love 200  
 Of Aristides, inexpressive love,  
 Which melts each bosom. Solemn they proceed,  
 Though lion-like in courage, at his call  
 Meek and obedient, as the fleecy breed  
 To wonted notes of Pan's conducting pipe. 205

Arriv'd, disbanded, in their sep'rate tents  
 Cecropia's tribes exhaust a tedious night,

Unvisited



Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 205

Unvisited by sleep. The morning breaks;  
Instead of joy to gratulate her light  
The tone of sadness from dejected hearts, 210  
Combining sighs and groans in murmur deep,  
Alarms the leader. Aristides, shew  
Thy countenance amongst us, hasty spake  
The warrior-poet ent'ring: All thy camp  
Enthusiastic sorrow hath o'erwhelm'd, 215  
And ev'ry heart unbrac'd. By earliest dawn  
Each left his restless couch. Their first discourse  
Was calm, and fill'd with narratives distinct  
Of thy accomplishments, and worth. At length  
A soldier thus in agitation spake: 220  
" Yet, O most excellent of Gods! O Jove!  
" This is the man, we banish'd! In thy fight  
" The most excelling man, whose sole offence  
" Was all-transcending merit, from his home  
" Our impious votes expell'd, by envy's spight 225  
" Seduc'd. We drove him fugitive through Greece;  
" Where

" Where still he held ungrateful Athens dear,  
 " For whose redemption from her sloth he rous'd  
 " All Greece to arms." The foldier clos'd in floods  
 Of anguish. Instant through the concourse ran  
 Contagious grief; as if the fiend Despair, 231  
 From his black chariot, wheeling o'er their heads  
 In clouds of darkness, dropp'd his pois'nous dew  
 Of melancholy down to chill the blood,  
 Unnerve the limbs, and fortitude dissolve. 235  
 Speed, Aristides. By th' immortal pow'rs!  
 The feeblest troop of Persians in this hour  
 Might overcome the tame, desponding force  
 Of thy dear country, mistress long confess'd  
 Of eloquence and arts, of virtue now 240  
 Through thy unerring guidance. Here the sage :

With-hold thy praise, good Æschylus—Be swift,  
 Arrange my fellow citizens in arms  
 Beneath each ensign of the sev'ral tribes.

I will

Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 207

I will appear a comforter, a friend, 245

Their public servant. Æschylus withdraws.

Soon Aristides, in his armour new,

Timothea's gift, advances from his tent.

Should from his throne th' Omnipotent descend

In visitation of the human race, 250

While dreading his displeasure; as to earth.

All heads would bend in reverential awe,

Contrite and conscious of their own misdeeds;

So look th' Athenians, though in all the pomp

Of Mars array'd, and terrible to half 255

The world in battle. Down their corslets bright

Tears trickle, tears of penitence and shame,

To see their injur'd patriot chief assume

In goodness heav'n's whole semblance, as he moves

Observant by, and through the weeping ranks 260

From man to man his lib'ral hand extends,

Consoling. No resentment he could shew,

Who



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Who none had felt. Ascending now on high,  
He thus address'd the penitential throng.

Rate not too high my merit, nor too low      265  
Your own depreciate. Error is the lot  
Of man; but lovely in the eye of heav'n  
Is sense of error. Better will you fight,  
As better men from these auspicious tears,  
Which evidence your worth, and please the gods.  
With strength and valour, equity of mind      271  
Uniting doubles fortitude. Your wives,  
Your progeny and parents, laws and rites,  
Were ne'er so well secur'd. The warlike bard  
Rose next: Requested by the sev'ral tribes,      275  
In their behalf I promise to thy rule  
All acquiescence. Bid them fight, retreat,  
Maintain, or yield a station; bid them face  
Innumerable foes, surmount a foss  
Deep as the sea, or bulwarks high as rocks;      280  
Subordination,



Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 209

Subordination, vigilance, contempt  
Of toil and death, thy dictates shall command.

Th' Oïlean hero, Timon, and the seed  
Of Lygdamis, are present, who encamp'd  
Among th' Athenians. They admire the chief,  
Nor less the people. While the term of morn 286  
Was passing thus, a summons to his tent  
Calls Aristides. Aemnestus there  
Salutes him: Attic friend, a new event  
In Sparta's quarter is to thee unknown; 290  
From me accept th' intelligence. The sun  
Was newly ris'n, when o'er th' Asopian flood  
An Eastern herald pass'd. Behind him tow'r'd  
A giant-fiz'd Barbarian. He approach'd  
Our camp; before Pausanias brought, he spake:

"I am Briareus, of Mardonian guards 296

"Commander. Through my delegated mouth

"Thus

" Thus faith the son of Gobryas: I have heard  
 " Among the Greeks your prowess vaunted high,  
 " Ye men of Sparta, that in martial ranks 300  
 " You either kill, or perish; but I find,  
 " Fame is a liar. I expected long,  
 " You would defy me on the field of war.  
 " Have I not seen you shift from wing to wing,  
 " The task imposing on th' Athenians twice 305  
 " To face the Medes and Persians; while yourselves  
 " Sought with our servants to contend in arms,  
 " Ye brave in name alone! Since you decline  
 " To challenge us, we, prime of eastern blood,  
 " With equal numbers challenge you to prove, 310  
 " That you possess, what rumour hath proclaim'd,  
 " The boldest hearts in Greece. Acknowledge else  
 " Your boasted valour bury'd in the grave  
 " With your Leonidas, o'erthrown and slain."

Pausanias gave no answer, not through fear, 315  
 But humour torpid and morose, which wrapp'd

In

In clouds of scorn his brow. Consulting none,  
With silent pride the giant he dismiss'd.

The challenger, in triumph turning back,  
Repas'd the river. Aemneftus paus'd ; 320

A second messenger appear'd. Behold,

In blooming vigour, flush'd by rapid haste,

Young Menalippus, from the rev'rend seer

Megistias sprung. Athenian chief, he said,

Bring down thy active, missile-weapon'd troops ;

On their immediate help Pausanias calls. 326

A cloud of hostile cavalry invests

Laconia's quarter. Javelins, arrows, darts,

In sheets discharg'd, have choak'd our last resource,

Gargaphia's fountain, and our heavy bands 330

Perplex and harass. Aristides hears,

And issues swift his orders, while the youth

Continues thus : Thou knew'st of old my fire,

Who at Thermopylæ expir'd. The just

Consort together. Aristides thus : 335

Ingenuous



Ingenuous youth, for Greece thy father bled  
 A spotless victim, but for ever lives  
 Companion with Leonidas in fame.  
 By heav'n protected, thou shalt live to see  
 Their death aton'd; the period is not far. 340  
 Come on; my force is ready. Medon arms  
 With Haliartus, once the shepherd-swain  
 In Oeta's pass to Menalippus known,  
 Whom both embrace with gratulation kind.

All march, but reach not Sparta's distant wing,  
 Before the Persians, fated with success, 346  
 Fil'd back to join Mardonius. Secret he  
 Was communing with Mirzes, most renown'd  
 Among the Magi. Thus the satrap clos'd:

Through each occurrence undisguis'd, O sage!  
 My circumstantial narrative hath run, 351  
 From where I enter'd first Trophonian ground,  
 Till



Till my descent and vision in the cave.  
 Speak frankly, Mirzes—nor believe thy words,  
 Whatever black presages they contain, 355  
 Subjoin'd to all Trophonius hath foretold,  
 Can change my firm resolves, or blunt my sword.

Solicitude for Persia to excess  
 Missed thee, satrap, to that graven god,  
 Rejoins the Magus, where, if ought besides 360  
 The craft of Grecian, mercenary priests,  
 It was the demon Arimanius rul'd.  
 He long hath prompted that Elëan seer,  
 Who blunts thy sword by divination false.  
 What thou dost vision call was empty dream; 365  
 Imagination heated, and disturb'd,  
 A texture wild and various, intermix'd  
 With ill-match'd images of things, which last  
 Oppress'd thy mind. Thy own distemper fram'd  
 Th' unreal grot, where Destinies of air 370

In

In apparition cut thy vital thread ;  
 Their act was thine, the oracle thy own,  
 All vague creation of thy erring sleep.

Briareus enters. At his tidings glad,  
 Which ostentation founded, thus exults 375  
 Mardonius: Sayst thou, Lacedæmon's chief  
 Was mute, when my defiance shook his ear?  
 Hence to the winds, ye auguries and signs!  
 Ye dreams and mysteries of Greece, avaunt !  
 Thou, Horomazes, not in marble fanes, 380  
 Nor woods oracular, and caves, dost dwell.  
 It is the pow'r of evil there misguides  
 Insensate mortals, and misguided me.  
 O, Artemisia ! now shall Gobryas' son  
 Look only, where no mystery can lurk, 385  
 On ev'ry manly duty. Nothing dark  
 The tracks of honour shades. To chiefs select,  
 Greek and Barbarian summon'd, he reveals

His

His fix'd resolves in council. They disperse  
 To execute his will. Among the rest 390  
 Young Alexander, Macedonia's lord,  
 Speeds to his quarters in the solemn bow'r  
 Of Dircè. There Mardonius had decreed  
 A cenotaph of marble, newly-rais'd  
 To his deplor'd Masistius. There the queen 395  
 Of Macedon, Phœbean Timon's child,  
 Bright Amarantha, like an ev'ning bird,  
 Whose trill delights a melancholy grove,  
 Oft with harmonious skill in Delphian strains,  
 Th' ingenuous practice of her maiden days, 400  
 Sung of her father, and Masistius good,  
 That friend, that known protector. She her lute  
 Was now in cadence with Dircæan rills  
 Attuning. Vocal melody she breath'd,  
 Which at another season might have won 405  
 Her lord from sadness. Sighing, he her song  
 Thus interrupts: Ah! comfort dear, as fair,



I come from Persia's council; where the son  
 Of Gobryas, urg'd by fear of sudden want  
 Through his wide host, nor animated less 410  
 By Spartan silence at the challenge proud  
 His herald bore, determines to reject  
 The augur's warnings. O'er the stream he means  
 To lead th' embattled nations, and surprise  
 Ere dawn, at least assail the camp of Greece 415  
 In ev'ry station. If she quits her lines,  
 Then will his num'rous cavalry surround  
 Her heavy phalanx on the level space.  
 O that my ancestor had never left  
 His Grecian home in Argos, nor acquir'd 420  
 Emathia's crown! I never then compell'd,  
 Had borne reluctant arms against a race  
 By friendship link'd, affinity, and blood,  
 With me and mine. What horror! cries the queen,  
 While fear surmises, that my husband's sword 425  
 May blindly cut my father's vital thread.

But



But not alone such parricide to shun  
 Should wake thy efforts. Alexander, no ;  
 Thou must do more. Our mutual words recall,  
 When thou to Athens by Mardonius sent 430  
 Didst from thy fruitless embassy rejoin  
 Me in Trachiniæ; whence the Barb'rous chief  
 Renew'd his march to lay Cecropian domes  
 In fresh destruction. " What a lot is mine,  
 " Thou saidst ? If Xerxes triumph, I become 435  
 " A slave in purple. Should the Greeks prevail,  
 " Should that Eubœan conqueror, the son  
 " Of Neocles be sent th' Athenian scourge . . .

I interrupted thus : " Awhile, dear lord,  
 " We must submit to wear the galling mask, 440  
 " Necessity imposes. New events  
 " Are daily scatter'd by the restless palm  
 " Of fortune. Some will prove propitious. Wise,  
 VOL. III. L " To

"To all benignant, Aristides serv'd

"By us in season will befriend our state." 445

Behold that season come ; let Grecian blood,  
Which warms thy veins, inspire thy prudent tongue  
This night th' Athenian hero to apprise  
Of all these tidings. Thus secure the Greeks  
Against surprisal ; timely thus oblige 450  
The first of men, and magnify thy name  
In Greece for ages. Here the youthful king:

Though by oppressive Xerxes forc'd to war,  
Shall I abuse the confidence repos'd  
By great Mardonius, qualify'd to win 455  
Regard at first, which intercourse augments ?  
I will do all by honour's rules allow'd,  
Will act a neutral part, withdraw my troops,  
Ev'n at the hazard of my crown and life,  
If such my queen's injunction. Ah ! forbear 460  
To

Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 219

To frown; what means this flushing of thy cheek?  
Must I betray Mardonius to his foes?

She spake abrupt; he started at her look:  
If forc'd obedience to a tyrant binds,  
If more, than I, Mardonius holds thy heart, 465  
Who has thy dearest confidence abus'd,  
Thou wilt discredit my accusing tongue.  
Could from this empty monument the shade  
Of just Mafistius rise, his awful voice  
Would verify a story, till this hour 470  
From thee conceal'd. My virgin hand in blood  
Of one Barbarian miscreant once I stain'd;  
Not to pollute my hymeneal state,  
Nor lay Mardonius gasping at my feet  
Like Mithridates in the streets of Thebes, 475  
This hateful camp for Delphi I forsook,  
Fled from a lawless and presumptuous flame,  
Insulting me, thy queen, who boast descent



From holy Timon. While for his behoof  
 Collecting Greeks against their country's cause, 480  
 Thyself was absent, and Mardonius left  
 My only guardian ; scorning every tie,  
 His daring importunity of love  
 Affail'd thy comfort's ear. What hope, what trust  
 In such Barbarians ? All their faith expir'd 485  
 With good Masistius. Should the Greeks be foil'd,  
 How long will Macedon thy realm, how long  
 Will Amarantha be securely held  
 Against a satrap, whose ungovern'd will  
 May covet both ? Of this, O prince, be sure, 490  
 Her part of shame will Amarantha bear  
 But brief shall be its date. The poniard still,  
 Which once preserv'd my honour, I possess  
 To cut my period of dishonour short.

The prince impatient, yet attentive, heard 495  
 Her words ; when thus the measure of his wrath  
 From his full bosom rapidly o'erflow'd.

O impious



Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 221

O impious breach of hospitable ties!  
O violation base of rights and laws,  
Exact'g swift revenge from heav'n and man, 500  
From me the first! Unparallel'd in form,  
O like the sister of thy Delphian god  
Immaculate! Did sacrilegious hands  
This pure abode of chastity assail  
With profanation? Less a friend to Greece, 505  
Than foe to false Mardonius, now I go.

He said, and order'd forth his swiftest steed.  
By moon-light, twinkling on a shaded track,  
He urg'd his secret way beyond the springs  
Asopian; whence an outlet short and close 510  
Through mount Cithæron to th' adjacent line  
Of Aristides led. Meantime the sound  
Of steps advancing Amarantha heard;  
She heard, and saw Mardonius. He his pace  
Stopp'd short, inclining with obeisance low 515

His stately frame. Through terror and amaze  
 To earth she rigid grew, of pow'r to fly  
 Depriv'd. He distant spake: Imperial dame,  
 That he offended once, Mardonius makes  
 A penitent confession. O! that fault 520  
 To no innate discourtesy impute,  
 But Eastern manners, not as Grecian pure;  
 The ignorance which err'd, by thee is chang'd  
 To veneration. From my presence here,  
 Which ne'er before intruded on this seat 525  
 Of thy retirement, do not too severe  
 A new offence interpret; rest assur'd,  
 A solemn cause impels. He silent waits,  
 Nor moves; till, gliding silently away,  
 Like Dian fair and chaste, but less severe, 530  
 The queen withdrew, and tow'rd a gallant chief,  
 Perhaps by her devices near his fall,  
 Thus far relented; for the private wrong  
 The frank atonement rais'd a generous sigh;  
 Against

Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 223

Against the public enemy of Greece, 535

Unquenchable she burn'd. Now left alone,

Before the cenotaph he kneel'd and spake:

To-morrow, O! to-morrow let my helm  
Blaze in thy beams auspicious, spirit bright,  
Whose name adorns this honorary tomb! 540

The weight of Asia's mighty weal, the weight  
Of fifty myriads on thy friend augments  
From hour to hour. Yet purg'd of gloomy thoughts,  
Clear of ambition, fave to win the palm  
Of victory for Xerxes, I approach 545

Thy suppliant. Thou an intercessor pure  
For me, deceiv'd by Grecian seers and gods,  
Before the throne of Horomazes stand,  
That he may bless my standards, if alone  
To guard so many worshippers, and spread 550  
By their success his celebrated name

Through each Hesperian clime. Now grant a sign,

Masistius, ere thy faithful friend depart,  
Fix'd, as he is, to vanquish, or to fall.

He ceas'd. Quick rapture dims his cheated eyes.  
He sees in thought a canopy of light, 556  
Descending o'er the tomb. In joy he speeds  
To preparation for the destin'd march.

*End of the Twenty-eighth Book.*



THE  
 A T H E N A I D.  
 BOOK the TWENTY-NINTH.

**A**MONG the Greeks their first nocturnal watch  
 Was near its period. From Laconia's wing  
 Return'd, th' Athenian leader thus bespake  
 Sicinus : Worthy of my trust, give ear.  
 Within six hours the army will decamp  
 To chuse a friendlier station ; so the chiefs  
 In gen'ral council, as Gargaphia choak'd  
 Withholds her wonted succour, have resolv'd.  
 At Juno's fane, yet undespoil'd, though near  
 Plataea's ruins, ev'ry band is charg'd

L 5

10

To

To reassemble. . . . Suddenly appears  
 A centinel, who speaks :. A stranger, near  
 The trenches waits, thee ; us in peaceful words  
 Saluting, he importunate requires  
 Thy instant presence. Aristides hastes ; 15  
 To whom the stranger : Bulwark of this camp,  
 Hear, credit, weigh, the tidings which I bear.  
 Mardonius, press'd by fear of threat'ning want,  
 At night's fourth watch the fatal stream will pass,  
 Inflexibly determin'd, though forbid 20  
 By each diviner, to assail your host  
 With all his numbers. I against surprise  
 Am come to warn you ; thee alone I trust,  
 My name revealing. I, O man divine !  
 I, who thus hazard both my realm, and life, 25  
 Am Alexander, Macedonian friend  
 Of Athens. Kindly on a future day  
 Remember me. He said, and spurr'd his steed  
 Back through the op'ning of Cithæron's hill.

Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 227

By Aristides instantly detach'd, 30  
Sicinus calls each leader to attend  
Pausanias. Attica's great captain joins  
The council full. His tidings he relates,  
Concluding thus with exhortation sage :

We destitute of water had resolv'd 35  
To change our station. Now without a pause  
We must anticipate th' appointed hour  
For this retreat, nor ling'ring tempt the force  
Of squadrons swift to intercept our march.  
All move your standards. Let Mardonius bring  
A host discourag'd by their augur's voice; 41  
Who are forbid to pass the fatal stream,  
But are compell'd by famine and despair  
To inauspicious battle. We to heav'n  
Obedient, heav'n's assistance shall obtain. 45  
A situation, safeguard to our flanks  
Against superior and surrounding horse,

In fight of burnt Plataea, of her fanes  
 Defac'd, and violated gods, I know ;  
 There will assure you conquest. All assent. 50

At once the different Grecians, who compose  
 The center, lift their ensigns. O'er the plain  
 First swiftly tow'rd's Plataean Juno's dome  
 Speeds Adimantus. In array more slow  
 The rest advance. Cleander guards the rear ; 55  
 Brave youth, whom chance malicious will bereave  
 Of half the laurels to his temples due.

Th' Athenians arm delib'rate ; in whose train  
 Illustrious Medon ranks a faithful troop,  
 His hundred Locrians. Haliartus there, 60  
 There Timon's few, but gen'rous Delphians stand,  
 By Aristides all enjoin'd to watch  
 Laconia's host. That sternly-tutor'd race,  
 To passion cold, he knew in action slow,

In



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In consultation torpid. Anxious long 65

He waits, and fears the eyelids of the morn,

Too soon unclosing, may too much reveal.

Sicinus, hast'ning to Laconia's camp,

Finds all confus'd, subordination lost

In altercation, wond'rous in that breed 70

Of discipline and manners, nor less strange,

Than if the laws of nature in the sky

Dissolv'd, should turn the moon and planets loose

From their accustom'd orbits, to obey

The sun no longer. When his first command 75

Pausanias issu'd for the march, nor thought

Of disobedience to disturb his pride;

One leader, Amompharetus, whose band

Of Pitanè rever'd him, as the first

Among the brave, refusal stern oppos'd, 80

Protesting firm, he never would retreat

Before Barbarians. Aemnestus swift,

Callicrates

Callicrates and others, long approv'd  
 In arms, entreat the Spartan to submit,  
 Nor disconcert the salutary plan 85  
 Of gen'ral council. Sullen he replies:

Not of that council, I will ne'er disgrace  
 The Spartan name. But all the Greeks withdrawn  
 Expect our junction at Saturnia's dome,  
 Callicrates and Aemnestus plead. 90  
 Would'st thou expose thy countrymen to face  
 Unaided yonder multitude of Medes,  
 Untry'd by us in combat? Yes, rejoins  
 The pertinacious man, ere yield to flight.

His troop applauded. Now contention harsh 95  
 Refounded high, exhausting precious hours,  
 The Spartan march retarding; when arriv'd  
 Sicinus witness to the wild debate.  
 At length Pausanias knit his haughty brow

At

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At Amompharetus, and spake: Weak man, 100  
Thou art insane. The chastisement thy due,  
Our time allows not. Instant march, or stay  
Behind and perish. In his two-fold grasp  
The restive Spartan lifting from the ground  
A pond'rous stone, before the gen'ral's feet 105  
Plac'd it, and thus: Against dishonest flight  
From strangers vile, I rest my suffrage there,  
Nor will forsake it. To Sicinus turn'd  
Pausanias: Tell th' Athenians what thou see'st.  
I by Cithæron's side to Juno's fane 110  
Am hast'ning; charge their phalanx to proceed.

Sicinus back to Aristides flies.

His ready phalanx from the lines he draws,  
Wing'd with his horse and bowmen; yet his course  
Suspends at Sparta's camp. There fullen, fix'd 115  
Like some old oak's deep-rooted, knotted trunk,

Which



Which hath endur'd the tempest-breathing months  
 Of thrice a hundred winters, yet remains  
 Unshaken, there amidst his silent troop  
 Sat Amompharetus. To him the sage: 120

Unwise, though brave, transgressing all the laws  
 Of discipline, though Spartan born and train'd;  
 Arise, o'ertake thy gen'ral and rejoin.  
 Thy country's mercy by some rare exploit  
 Win to forgive thy capital default, 125  
 Excess of courage. Where Pausanias, arm'd  
 With pow'r unlimited in war, where all  
 The Spartan captains in persuasion fail'd,  
 Requir'd not less than Jove himself, or Jove  
 In Aristides to prevail. Uprose 130  
 The warrior, late inflexible; yet slow,  
 In strictest regularity of march,  
 Led his well-order'd files. Correcting thus

The



Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 233

The erring Spartan, Aristides swept  
Across the plain to fill the gen'ral host. 135

Not yet the twilight, harbinger of morn,  
Had overcome the stars. The Persian scouts,  
Who rang'd abroad, observing that no sound  
Was heard, no watch-word through the Grecian  
lines,

Adventur'd nigh, and found an empty space. 140  
Swift they appris'd Mardonius, who had form'd  
His whole array. Encircled by his chiefs  
Greek and Barbarian, first he gave command,  
'That ev'ry hand provide a blazing torch  
To magnify his terrors, and with light 145  
Facilitate pursuit; then glad some thus  
Address'd his friends of Thessaly and Thebes:

Now Larissæan Thorax, and the rest  
Of Aleuadian race; now Theban lords,  
Judge

Judge of the Spartans justly. Vaunted high 150  
 For unexampled prowess, them you saw  
 First change their place, imposing on the sons  
 Of Athens twice the formidable task  
 To face my chosen Persians; next they gave  
 To my defiance no reply, and last 155  
 Are fled before me. Can your augurs shew  
 A better omen, than a foe dismay'd?  
 But, kind allies, to you my friendly care  
 Shall now be prov'd. These thunderbolts of war,  
 As you esteem them, will Mardonius chuse 160  
 For his opponents. Level your attack  
 Entire against th' Athenians. None I dread;  
 Yet by the sun less terrible to me  
 Is that Pausanias, head of Sparta's race,  
 Than Aristides. Him Masistius lov'd; 165  
 If you o'erthrow, preserve him; in the name  
 Of your own gods I charge you. Mithra, shine  
 On me no longer, if in grateful warmth

Confessing

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50 Confessing ev'ry benefit receiv'd,  
I do not clasp that guardian of my friend! 170  
Now, Persians, mount your bold Nisæan steeds,  
Alert your targets grasp, your lances poise;  
The word is Cyrus. Royal spirit! look  
5 On me, deriv'd from thy illustrious blood,  
Yet not in me illustrious, if this day 175  
My hand, or courage faint. Look down on these,  
Sons of thy matchless veterans. The fire,  
Which at thy breath o'erspread the vanquish'd East,  
0 Light in their off's'pring; that the loud report  
Of their achievements on Asopian banks, 180  
Far as the floods of Ganges may proclaim  
The western world a vassal to thy throne.

He said, and spurr'd his courser. Through the ford  
He dashes, follow'd by th' impetuous speed  
Of tall equestrian bands in armour scal'd 185  
With gold, on trappings of embroider'd gloss  
Superbly



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Superbly seated. Persians next and Medes  
Advance, an infantry select, whose mail  
Bright-gilt, or silver'd o'er, augments the light  
Of sparkling brands, innumerably wav'd 190  
By nations, plunging through the turbid flood  
In tumult rude, emblazing, as they pass,  
The skies, the waters, and with direst howl  
Distracting both. Like savage wolves they rush,  
As with ferocious fangs to rend the Greeks, 195  
To gnaw their flesh, and satiate in their blood  
The greedy thirst of massacre. In chief  
Here Mindarus commands, by Midias join'd  
And Tiridates, powerless all to curb,  
Much more to marshal such Barbarian throngs, 200  
Which, like a tumbling tide on level strands,  
When new the moon impels it, soon o'erwhelm'd  
Th' Asopian mead; or like the mightier surge,  
When ireful Neptune strikes the ocean's bed  
Profound. Upheav'd, the bottom lifts and rolls

A ridge



A ridge of liquid mountains o'er th' abodes  
Of some offending nation; while the heav'ns  
With coruscation red his brother Jove 208  
Inflames, and rocks with thunder's roar the poles.

Th' auxiliar Greeks compact and silent march  
In strength five myriads. In arrangement just  
The foot by Leontiades, the wings  
Of horse by Thorax and Emathia's king  
Were led. Now, long before th' unwieldy mass  
Of his disorder'd multitude advanc'd, 215  
Mardonius, rushing through the vacant lines  
Of Lacedæmon, tow'rs Cithæron bent  
His swift career. Faint rays began to streak  
The third clear morning of that fruitful month,  
The last in summer's train. Immortal day! 220  
Which all the Muses consecrate to fame.

O thou! exalted o'er the laurell'd train,  
High as the sweet Calliopè is thron'd

Above

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Above her sisters on the tuneful mount,  
 O father, hear! Great Homer, let one ray 225  
 From thy celestial light an humble son  
 Of thine illuminate; lest freedom mourn  
 Her chosen race dishonour'd in these strains.  
 Thou too, my eldest brother, who enjoy'st  
 The paradise thy genius hath portray'd, 230  
 Propitious smile. Lend vigour to a Muse,  
 Who in her love of freedom equals thine,  
 But to sustain her labours from thy store  
 Must borrow language, sentiment and verse.

Cithæron's ridge, from where Asopus rose, 235  
 Stretch'd to Plataea, with a southern fence  
 Confining one broad level, which the floods  
 From their Hesperian head in eastward flow  
 Meandering parted. O'er the mountain's foot  
 His course Pausanias destin'd, where the soil 240  
 Abrupt and stony might the dread career

Of

Book XXIX. THE ATHEMAID. 239

Of Persia's cavalry impede. His ranks,  
Accompany'd by Tegea's faithful breed,  
Had measur'd now ten furlongs of their march  
Half o'er the plain to reach the friendly ground;  
Then halted near an Eleusinian dome 246  
Of Ceres; thence they mov'd, but timely first  
Were join'd by Amompharetus. At length  
The chosen track was gain'd. Pausanias cast  
His eyes below first northward, and survey'd 250  
Between the river and his empty camp  
A blaze involving all the plain. The yell  
Of mouths Barbarian, of unnumber'd feet  
Th' impetuous tread, which crush'd the groaning  
turf,  
The neigh of horses, and their echoing hoofs, 255  
Th' insulting clash of shields and sabres, shook  
The theatre of mountains; hollow-voic'd,  
Their cavities rebellow'd, and enlarg'd  
The hideous sound. His eyes the orient dawn  
Attracted



240 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIX.

Attracted next. Saturnia's roof he view'd, 260  
 But distant still, around whose sacred walls  
 The first-departed Grecians stood in arms  
 Beneath wide-floating banners, wish'd more nigh.  
 There was the Genius of Plataea seen  
 By fancy's ken, a hov'ring mourner seen, 265  
 O'er his renown'd, but desolated seat,  
 One mass of ruins mountainous. He mark'd  
 Th' Athenians traversing the meads below  
 In full battalia. Resolute, sedate,  
 Without one shield in disarray, they mov'd 270  
 To join the gen'ral host. Beyond the stream  
 In prospect rose the battlements of Thebes;  
 Whose sons perfidious, but in battle firm,  
 With phalanges of other hostile Greeks  
 Spread on the bank, and menace to surmount 275  
 The shallow current for some dire attempt.  
 To Aemnestus, marching by his side,  
 Pausanias turns; the army he commands

To



Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 241

To halt ; while, mast'ring all unmanly fear,  
His haughty phlegm serenely thus fulfils 280  
A leader's function: Spartan, we in vain  
Precipitate our junction with allies  
At Juno's distant fane ; the hour is past ;  
The Pitanēan mutineer the cause.  
Seest thou yon Persian squadrons ? They precede  
The whole Barbarian multitude. The storm 286  
Is gath'ring nigh ; we sep'rate must abide  
'The heavy weight of this unequal flock,  
Unless th' Athenians, still in fight, impart  
A present aid. A herald swift he sends 290  
To Aristides, with this weighty charge:  
" All Greece is now in danger, and the blood  
" Of Hercules in me. Athenian help  
" Is wanted here, their missile-weapon'd force."  
Last he address'd Tisamenus : Provide 295  
The sacrifice for battle—Warriors, form.

Slain is the victim; but th' inspecting seer  
 Reveals no sign propitious. Now full nigh  
 The foremost Persian horse discharge around  
 Their javelins, darts, and arrows. Sparta's chief  
 In calm respect of inauspicious heav'n 301  
 Directs each soldier at his foot to rest  
 The passive shield, submissive to endure  
 Th' assault, and watch a signal from the gods.  
 A second time unfavorable prove 305  
 The victim's entrails. Unremitted show'rs  
 Of pointed arms distribute wounds and death.

Oh! discipline of Sparta! Patient stands  
 The wounded soldier, sees a comrade fall,  
 Yet waits permission from his chief to shield 310  
 His own, or brother's head. Among the rest  
 Callicrates is pierc'd; a mortal stroke  
 His throat receives. Him celebrate, O muse!  
 Him in historic rolls deliver'd down

To

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To admiration of remotest climes 315

Through latest ages. These expiring words

Beyond Olympian chaplets him exalt,

Beyond his palms in battle: Not to die

For Greece, but dying, ere my sword is drawn,

Without one action worthy of my name, 320

I grieve. He said, and fainting on the breast

Of Aemnestus, breath'd in spouting blood

His last, departing thy attendant meet,

Leonidas, in regions of the blest'd.

A second victim bleeds; the gath'ring foes 325

To multitude are grown; the show'rs of death

Increase; then melted into flowing grief

Pausanian pride. He, tow'rs the fane remote

Of Juno lifting his afflicted eyes,

Thus suppliant spake: O Goddess! let my hopes

Be not defeated, whether to obtain 331

A victory so glorious, or expire

Without dishonour to Herculean blood.



Amidst the pray'r Tegēan Chileus, free  
 From stern controul of Lacedæmon's laws, 335  
 No longer waits inactive; but his band  
 Leads forth, and firmly checks th' insulting foe.  
 The sacrifice is prosp'rous, and the word  
 For gen'ral onset by Pausanias giv'n.  
 Then, as a lion, from his native range 340  
 Confin'd a captive long, if once his chain,  
 He breaks, with mane erect and eyes of fire  
 Asserts his freedom, rushing in his strength  
 Resistless forth; so Sparta's phalanx turns  
 A face tremendous on recoiling swarms 345  
 Of squadron'd Persians, who to Ceres' fane  
 Are driv'n. But there Mardonius, like the god  
 Of thunders ranging o'er th' ethereal vault  
 Thick clouds on clouds impregnated with storms,  
 His chosen troops embattles. Bows and darts 350  
 Rejecting, gallantly to combat close  
 They urge undaunted efforts, and to death

Their



Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 245

Their ground maintain, in courage, or in might  
Not to the Greeks inferior, but in arms,  
In discipline and conduct. Parties small, 355  
Or single warriors, here with vigour wield  
The battle-ax and sabre; others rush  
Among the spears, to wrench away, or break  
By strength of hands, the weapons of their foes.

But fiercest was the contest, where sublime 360  
The son of Gobryas from a snow-white steed  
Shot terror. There selected warriors charg'd,  
A thousand vet'rans, by their fathers train'd,  
Who shar'd renown with Cyrus. On the right,  
Close to his gen'ral's side, Briareus grasp'd 365  
A studded mace, Pangæus on the left,  
Nam'd from a Thracian hill. The bristly front  
Of Sparta's phalanx, with intrepid looks  
Mardonius fac'd, and thunder'd out these words :

Come, twice-defy'd Pausanias, if thou hear'st;  
 Thy Spartan prowess on Mardonius try. 371

Pausanias heard; but shunn'd retorting words,  
 In saturnine disdain laconic thus  
 His men addressing: Yours the soldier's part,  
 The gen'ral's mine; advance not, but receive 375  
 These loose Barbarians on your steady points.

Not one of Persia's breed, though early train'd,  
 So strong a javelin as Mardonius lanc'd,  
 Or in its aim so true. Three brothers grac'd  
 The foremost line of Sparta, natives all 380  
 Of sweet Amyclæ, all in age and arms  
 Mature, their splendid lineage from the stock  
 Of Tyndarus deriving. Them on earth  
 Three javelins, whirl'd successive, laid supine,  
 An effort of Mardonius. Three in rank 385  
 Behind partake the same resistless doom,

Three

Three bold companions in the hardy chace  
 Of boars on green Taygetus. Supply'd  
 With weapons new, the phalanx still to gore  
 He perseveres unweary'd, not unlike 390  
 Some irritated porcupine, of size  
 Portentous, darting his envenom'd quills  
 Through each assailant. In Laconia's front  
 So many warriors and their weapons fall'n,  
 Leave in her triple tire of pointed steel 395  
 A void for swift impression of her foes.  
 In rush Briareus and Pangæus huge,  
 Whose maces send fresh numbers to the shades.  
 The op'ning widens. On his vaulting steed  
 Mardonius follows, like ensanguin'd Mars 400  
 By his auxiliars grim, dismay and rage,  
 Preceded. Rivalling the lightning's beams,  
 The hero's sabre bright and rapid wheels  
 Aloft in air. A comet thus inflames  
 The cheek of night; pale mortals view in dread



Th' unwonted lustre, transient tho' it be, 406  
 Among the lights of heav'n. Pausanias rous'd,  
 Advancing, at Briareus points his lance.  
 Meantime six Spartans of the younger class  
 Assail Mardonius. One his bridle grasp'd; 410  
 The Persian fabre at the shoulder close  
 Lopp'd off th' audacious arm. Another stoop'd  
 To seize the chieftain's foot, and drag him down;  
 Pois'd on his stirrup, he in sunder sinote  
 The Spartan's waist. Another yet approach'd, 415  
 Who at a blow was cloven to the chin.  
 Two more the gen'rous horse, uprearing, dash'd  
 Maim'd and disabled to the ground; the last  
 His teeth disfigur'd, and his weight oppress'd.  
 As some tall-masted ship, on ev'ry side 420  
 Assail'd by pinnaces and skiffs whose strength  
 Is number, drives her well-directed prow  
 Through all their feeble clusters; while her chief  
 Elate contemplates from her lofty deck

The



Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 249

The hostile keels upturn'd, and floating dead, 425

Where'er she steers victorious: so the steed

Nisæan tramples on Laconian slain,

Triumphant so Mardonius from his seat

Looks down. But fate amidst his triumph shews

Briareus yielding to a forceful blow 430

Of stern Pausanias, and Pangæus pierc'd

By Amompharetus. Their giant bulks,

Thrown prostrate, crash three long-protended rows

Of Spartan spears. Wide-branching thus huge  
oaks,

By age decay'd, or twisted from the roots 435

By rending whirlwinds, in their pond'rous fall

Lay desolate the under shrubs, and trees

Of young, unstable growth. More awful still,

Another object strikes the satrap's eye;

With nodding plumes, and formidable stride, 440

Lo! Aemnestus. Asia's gen'ral feels

Emotions now, which trouble, not degrade

250 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIX.

His gen'rous spirit. Not, as Priam's son  
 On sight of dire Achilles, thoughts of flight  
 Possess Mardonius, but to wait the foe, 445  
 And if to die, with honour die, if live  
 Enjoy a life of fame. His giant guard  
 Around him close; one levels at the casque  
 Of Aemneſtus; but the weighty mace  
 Slides o'er the Spartan's flanting ſhield, and ſpends  
 Its rage in duſt. The ſtooping giant leaves 451  
 His flank unguarded, and admits a ſtroke,  
 Which penetrates the entrails. Down he ſinks,  
 Another tow'r of Aſia's battle ſtrewn  
 In hideous ruin. Soon a ſecond bleeds, 455  
 A third, a fourth. The fifth in poſture ſtands  
 To cruſh the victor with a blow well-aim'd;  
 Him Menalippus at the brawny pit  
 Of his uplifted arm tranſpiercing deep  
 Diſables. Aemneſtus ſtruggles long 460  
 To grapple with his victim, and invokes

Leonidas.

Leonidas aloud. The active son  
 Of Gobryas plants throughout the Spartan shield  
 A wood of Javelins. His Nisæan horse,  
 Careering, vaulting, with his fangs and hoofs 465  
 Protects his lord. The guards, who still surviv'd,  
 With faithful zeal their whole united strength  
 Exert unwearied for a lib'ral chief.  
 Some paces backward Aemnestus forc'd,  
 Impels his heel against a loos'ning stone, 470  
 Broad, craggy, scarce inferior to the weight  
 Discharg'd by Hector on the massy bars  
 Of Agamemnon's camp. The Spartan quick  
 From his left arm removes the heavy shield,  
 With javelins thick transfix'd. From earth he lifts  
 The casual weapon, and with caution marks 476  
 The fatal time and distance. O'er the heads  
 Of thy furrounding guard the fragment hurl'd  
 Descends, Mardonius, on thy manly chest,  
 And lays thee o'er thy courser's back supine 480



Without sensation. O, illustrious man,  
 Whose dazzling virtues through thy frailties beam'd!  
 Magnanimous, heroic, gen'rous, pure  
 In friendship, warm in gratitude! This doom  
 At once dissolves all interval of pain 485  
 To mind, or body. Not a moment more  
 Hast thou, ingenuous satrap, to repine,  
 Or grieve. Go, hero, thy Masistius greet,  
 Where no ambition agitates the breast,  
 No gloomy veil of superstition blinds, 490  
 No friend can die, no battle can be lost!

This fall, to Greece decisive as to heav'n  
 Enceladus o'erthrown, when, thunder-pierc'd,  
 He under Ætna's torrid mass was chain'd,  
 Discomfits Asia's hopes. In fresh array 495  
 Meantime the phalanx, by Pausanias form'd,  
 Proceeds entire. Facility of skill  
 Directs their weapons; pace by pace they move  
 True



Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 253

True to the cadence of accustom'd notes  
From gentle flutes, which trill the Doric lays 500  
Of Alcman and Terpander. Slow they gain  
The ground, which Persia quits, till Chileus bold  
With his Tegæans gores the hostile flanks;  
Confusion then, and gen'ral rout prevail.

The fugitives proclaim Mardonius slain; 505  
The whole Barbarian multitude disperse  
In blind dismay; cool Mindarus in vain  
Attempts to check their flight; all seek the camp;  
And now the Spartan flutes, combin'd with shouts  
Of loud Tegæans stimulate his speed 510  
Across the ford. His trenches he regains,  
And there to Midias, Tiridates brave,  
And chosen satraps, gath'ring at his call,  
Thus spake: The flow'r of Asia in the dust  
Reclines his glories. Feel your loss like me, 515  
Not overcome by sorrow, or surprise

At

254 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIX.

At changes natural to man, the sport  
 Of his own passions, and uncertain chance.  
 Vicissitudes of fortune I have prov'd,  
 One day been foil'd, a conqueror the next. 520  
 In arduous actions though experienc'd minds  
 Have much to fear, not less of hope remains  
 To animate the brave. Amid this storm  
 The throne of Cyrus, your exalted fires,  
 Your own nobility, recall; deserve 525  
 The rank, you hold; occasion now presents  
 For such a trial. To uphold my king,  
 My country's name, and piously revenge  
 My kindred blood new-spilt, my sword, my arm,  
 My life, I destine. Multitude is left, 530  
 Surpassing twenty myriads; ev'n despair  
 Befriends us; famine threat'ning, and the dread  
 Of merciless resentment in our foes,  
 May force these rally'd numbers to obtain 534  
 From their own swords relief. Behold your camp,  
 Strong-fenc'd

Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 255

Strong-fenc'd and bulwark'd by Mafitian care,  
A present refuge. See th' auxiliar Greeks  
Entire, advancing on th' inferior bands  
Of Athens. Still may Xerxes o'er the West  
Extend his empire, and regret no part 540  
Of this disaster, but Mardonius slain.  
Assume your posts, for stern defence provide.

*End of the Twenty-ninth Book.*



THE

## A T H E N A I D.

## BOOK the THIRTIETH.

**O** God of light and wisdom ! thee the Muse  
 Once more addrest. Thou didst late behold  
 The Salaminian brine with Asian blood  
 Discolour'd. Climbing now the steep ascent  
 To thy meridian, for a stage of war 5  
 More horrible and vast, thy beaming eye  
 Prepare. Thou over wide Platæa's field,  
 Chang'd to a crimson lake, shall drive thy car,  
 Nor see a pause to havoc, till the West  
 In his dark chambers shuts thy radiant face. 10

Now



Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 257

Now had the herald, to Cecropia's chief  
Sent by Pausanias, in his name requir'd  
Immediate aid. No doubt suspends the haste  
Of Aristides ; who arrays his ranks  
With cordial purpose to sustain that strength 15  
Of Greece, Laconia's phalanx. Lo ! in fight  
New clouds of battle hov'ring. He discerns  
Th' array of Leontiades, with wings  
Of Macedonic, and Thessalian horse ;  
Then calls Sicinus : Friend, he said, observe ; 20  
Robust and bold, to perfidy inur'd,  
Not less than arms, yon Thebans cross our march.  
I trust the justice of our cause will foil  
Them, thrice our number ; but events like this  
Are not in man's disposal. If I fall, 25  
Not rashly, good Sicinus, rest assur'd,  
Themistocles survives. The gate of Greece  
He guards, Eubœa and Thessalia holds,  
Those granaries of plenty. Eastern shores

With

258 THE ATHENAID. Book XXX.

With all his force, perhaps victorious now, 30  
 Xanthippus will relinquish, and maintain  
 The sea auxiliar to thy prudent lord;  
 Thus all be well, though Aristides bleeds :  
 This to Themistocles report. But go,  
 Fly to Cleander ; him and all the Greeks 35  
 Rouse from the fane of Juno to the field ;  
 Both Spartans and Athenians want their aid.  
 Thy tribe, undaunted Cimon, place behind  
 Olympiodorus ; if his active bands  
 Repel Theffalia's horse, avoid pursuit ; 40  
 Wheel on the flank of Thebes. Here Delphi's priest :

Behold Emathia's standards front thy right ;  
 With Haliartus, and Oileus' son,  
 Let me be station'd there. I trust, the spouse  
 Of Amarantha, at her father's sight, 45  
 Will sheath a sword involuntary drawn,  
 Nor ties of hospitality and blood

Profane

Profane to serve Barbarians. I accept  
 The gen'rous offer, sage and gallant seer,  
 Spake Aristides. In that wing thy friend, 50  
 The learn'd and manly Æschylus presides.  
 But, to thy god appealing, I enjoin  
 Thy rev'rend head to cover in retreat  
 Its unpolluted hairs, should fire of youth,  
 Or yet more strong necessity, impel 55  
 Thy son to battle. Here th' enraptur'd priest:

The inspiration of my god I feel;  
 A glorious day to Athens I preface,  
 I see her laurels fresh. Apollo joins  
 His sister Pallas to preserve a race, 60  
 Which all the Muses love. His awful power  
 Will chain the monster parricide, and rouse  
 The Grecian worth in Alexander's heart.

These animated accents fire the line.  
 Within the measure of an arrow's flight 65  
 Each



260 THE ATHENAID. Book XXX.

Each army now rank'd opposite. A thought  
 Of piety and prudence from his place  
 Mov'd Aristides. Single he advanc'd  
 Between the hosts; offensive arms he left  
 Behind him; ev'n his plumed helm resign'd 70  
 Gave to his placid looks their lib'ral flow.  
 Before him hung his ample shield alone,  
 Timothea's gift, whose sculptur'd face display'd  
 Truth, equity, and wisdom hand in hand,  
 As in his breast. Exalting high in tone 75  
 His gracious voice, he thus adjur'd his foes:

Ye men deriv'd from Cadmus, who in Greece  
 Establish'd letters, fruitful mother since  
 Of arts and knowledge, to Barbarian spoil  
 This hour expos'd; ye sons of Locris, hear, 80  
 Thessalians, Phocians, Dorians, all compell'd  
 By savage force to arm against your friends,  
 Of language, rites and manners with your own  
 Congenial:



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Congenial : Aristides, in the name  
Of all the Grecian deities, invokes 85  
Your own sensations to disarm your hands  
Of impious weapons, which retard the help  
We bear to those now struggling in defence  
Of Grecian freedom, sepulchres and fanes.

He said ; was heard like Enoch, like the man  
Who walk'd with God, when eminently wise, 91  
Among th' obscene, the violent, and false,  
Of justice and religion, truth and peace  
He spake exploded, and from menac'd death  
To God withdrew. The fell Bœotians rend 95  
The sky with threat'ning clamour, and their spears  
Shake in defiance ; while the word to charge  
Perfidious Leontiades conveys.  
Retreating backward, Aristides cloaths  
His face in terror. So Messiah chang'd 100  
His countenance serene, when full of wrath

Bent

Bent on Satanic enemies, who shook  
 Heav'n's peaceful campaign with rebellious arms,  
 He grasp'd ten thousand thunders, and infix'd  
 Plagues in their souls ; while darts of piercing fire  
 Through their immortal substances, by sin 106  
 Susceptible of pain, his glaring wheels  
 Shot forth pernicious. Aristides leads  
 His phalanx on. Now Greeks to Greeks oppose  
 Their steely structures of tremendous war. 110  
 With equal spears and shields their torrent fronts  
 They clash together ; like the jostling rocks,  
 Symplegades Cyanean, at the mouth  
 Of Thracia's foaming Bosphorus, were feign'd,  
 Infrangible opponents, to sustain 115  
 A mutual shock which tempested the frith,  
 Dividing Europe from the Orient world.

Meanwhile Phœbean Timon's glowing zeal,  
 Replete with patriot and religious warmth,

Thus

Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 263

Thus in the wing which Æschylus had form'd, 120

Bespake the encircling chieftains: O'er the space

Between Asopus, and the main array

Of Thebes, I see the Macedonian horse

But half advanc'd: Their tardy pace denotes

Reluctance. Lo! I meditate an act 125

To prove my zeal for universal Greece,

Her violated altars, and the tombs

Robb'd of their precious dust. My slender band,

So long companions in adventures high

With your choice Locrians, Haliartus, join 130

To Medon's banner. Æschylus, observe

My progress; if my piety succeeds,

Thou, as a foldier, take advantage full.

So saying, o'er the plain in solemn pace

His rev'rend form he moves, by snowy bands 135

Pontifical around his plumed helm

Distinguish'd. Thus from Salem's holy gate

Melchisedek,



Melchisedek, the priest of him Most High,  
 Went forth to meet, and benedictions pour  
 On Terah's son in Shaveh's royal vale. 140

The Macedonian squadrons at the fight  
 Fall back in rev'rence ; their dismounting prince  
 So wills. The father and the son embrace.

Oh! Amarantha's husband! joyful sighs  
 The parent. Oh! my Amarantha's fire! 145  
 In equal joy the husband. Timon then:

A Greek in blood, to Delphi's priest ally'd,  
 The god of Delphi's blessing now secure ;  
 Abandon these Barbarians to the fate,  
 Which in the name of Phœbus I denounce 150  
 For his insulted temple, and the rape  
 Of Amarantha from Minerva's shrine.  
 Yet to unsheath an unsuspected sword

Against



Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 265

Against them, neither I, nor heav'n require,  
Less thy own honour; but repass the stream, 155  
Amid this blind uproar unnotic'd seek  
Thermopylæ again; and reach thy realm.  
O'er all that clime Themistocles prevails,  
My friend; his present amity obtain,  
Cecropia's future love, nor hazard more 160  
Thy fame and welfare. Aristides knows  
My truth, replies the monarch; now to thee  
Obedience prompt a second proof shall yield.  
Ascend a steed; to Amarantha's arms  
I will conduct thee first; th' auspicious flight 165  
Of both, a father shall assist and bless.

They speed away, in extasy the fire  
To clasp his darling child in Dirce's grove.

This pass'd in Medon's eye, who watchful stood  
With Haliartus, and a troop advanc'd, 170

In care for Timon. When apparent now  
 The Macedonian squadrons quit the field  
 Of strife, the heavy-cuirass'd of his wing  
 With ferry'd shields by Æschylus is led,  
 In evolution wheeling on the flanks 175  
 Of that strong mass'd battalia, which compos'd  
 The hostile center. First in phalanx stood  
 Unwilling Locrians. Medon lifts his voice,  
 And to each eye abash'd his awful shape,  
 Like some reproving deity, presents; 180  
 They hear, they see Oileus in his son,  
 As ris'n a mourning witness of their shame  
 From his sepulchral bed. The banners drop  
 Before him; down their spears and bucklers fall;  
 They break, disperse, and fly with childrens' fear,  
 When by authority's firm look surpris'd 186  
 In some attempt forbidden, or unmeet.  
 Bœotian files are next. With sudden wheel  
 They form a front, and dauntless wait the assault.

Still

Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 267

Still in the van robust and martial Thebes 190  
Unbroken stems th' agility and skill  
Of her opponent Athens. Long unspent  
The tide of well-conducted battle flows  
Without decision strong. At length by fate  
Is Leontiades impell'd to meet 195  
Cecropia's chief, where Thebes began to feel  
His mighty pressure. Whether justice strung  
His nerves with force beyond a guilty hand,  
Or of his manly limbs the vigour match'd  
His fortitude of mind; his falchion clove 200  
Down to the neck that faithless Greek, of Greece  
The most malignant foe. The treacherous deed,  
Which laid fair Thespia, with Plataean tow'rs  
In dust, he thus aton'd. A bolt from heav'n  
Thus rives an oak, whose top divided hangs 205  
On either side obliquely from the trunk.  
Murichides the Hellespontin bleeds,  
Too zealous friend of Asia, in whose cause



268 THE ATHENAID. Book XXX.

This day he arm'd. By great Mardonius charg'd  
Late messenger of friendship, he in peace 210

On Salaminian shores had touch'd the hand,  
Which now amid the tumult pierc'd his heart,  
Not willingly, if known. Then Lynceus fell,  
From Œdipæan Polyxenes sprung,

The last remains of that ill-fated house. 215

Mironides and Clinias near the side  
Of Aristides fought, his strong support.

Yet undismay'd and firm three hundred chiefs,  
Or sons of proudest families in Thebes,

Dispute the victory till death. Meantime 220

Olympiodorus from the left had gall'd

Theſſalia's squadrons, like a fleetly storm

Checking their speed. Athenian horse, though few,

Mix'd with their bowmen, well maintain'd their  
ground.

His own true-levell'd shaft transfix'd the throat 225

Of Larissæan Thorax; who in dust

Buries at length his Aleuadian pride.

Rememb'ring



Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 269

Rememb'ring all his charge bold Cimon rears  
His mighty spear. Impetuous through a band  
Of yielding Phocians he on Theban ranks 230  
Falls like a rapid falcon, when his weight  
Precipitates to strike the helpless prey.  
Him slaughter follows; slaughter from the right  
On Æschylus attends, and mightier waits  
On Aristides. Justice in his breast 235  
Awhile was blind to mercy undeserv'd,  
Ev'n unimplor'd, by persevering foes  
Invet'rate. Now on this empurpled stage  
Of vengeance due to perfidy and crimes,  
Twice their own number had the Athenians heap'd  
Of massacred Bœotians; but as heav'n, 241  
Not to destruction punishing, restrains  
Its anger just, and oft the harden'd spares,  
That time may soften, or that suff'rings past,  
Not measur'd full, may turn the dread of more 245  
To reformation; Aristides thus

270 THE ATHENAID. Book XXX.

Relenting bade retreat be sounded loud,  
 Then, by th' obedient host furrounded, spake  
 Serene: Enough of Grecian blood is spilt,  
 Ye men of Athens; low in dust are laid 250  
 The heads of those who plann'd the fall of Greece,  
 The populace obtuse, resembling you,  
 Enlighten'd people, as the sluggish beast  
 A gen'rous courser, let your pity save  
 In gratitude to Jove, creating yours 255  
 Unlike Bœotia's breed—Now form again.

Thus equity and mercy he combin'd,  
 Like that archangel, authoris'd by heav'n  
 Chief o'er celestial armies, when the fall'n  
 From purity and faith in Eden's bow'rs 260  
 Not to perdition nor despair he left  
 Abandon'd. Aristides still proceeds:

New victories invite you; Sparta long  
 Hath wanted succour; Men of Athens, march.

Lo!

Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 271

Lo! Menalippus greets in rapid haste 265

This more than hero. I am come, he said,

To bring thee tidings of Mardonius slain

In open fight. Pausanias still demands

Thy instant presence. In pursuit he reach'd

The stream. "Not now that passage is forbid," 270

Tisamenus exclaim'd. The gen'ral pass'd

In vain to force the well-defended camp;

Repuls'd in ev'ry part he dubious stands

With disappointment fore; on Attic skill

To mount entrenchments and a rampart storm

Laconians and Tegæans both depend 276

To crown the day. Th' Athenian heard, and cool

In four divisions separates the host.

Four thousand warriors, light and heavy-arm'd,

Each part compose; whose ensigns o'er the flood 280

In order just are carry'd. He attains

Th' adjacent field, and joins Pausanias there;

Whose ravell'd brow, and countenance of gloom



Present a lion's grimness, who, some fold,  
 Or stall attempting, thence by vollied stones 285  
 Of trooping shepherds, and of herdsmen, chas'd,  
 Hath suddenly retreated, though oppress'd  
 By famine dire. To Aristides spake  
 With haughtiness redoubled Sparta's chief:

Didst thou forget, Athenian, who commands 290  
 The Grecian armies? Thou hast loiter'd long  
 Since my two mandates. With majestic warmth  
 The righteous man: Pausanias, now receive  
 From Aristides language new, but just.  
 Thine is the pride of satraps, not the light 295  
 Ingenuous vanity of Greeks, from sense  
 Of freedom, sense of cultivated minds,  
 Above the rest of mortals. No; a black,  
 Barbaric humour festers at thy heart,  
 Portending usurpation. Know, proud man, 300  
 Thou hast been weigh'd, and long deficient found  
 By



Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 273

By Aristides, thy superior far,  
Then most superior, when for public good  
Compliant most. Thou soon, O! Spartan born,  
Yet in thy country's decency untaught, 305  
Will like a Persian cast a loathing eye  
On freedom, on Lycurgus and his laws,  
Which gall a mind despotic. I presage  
Thee dangerous, Pausanias. Where the seeds  
Of dark ambition I suspect, my eye 310  
Becomes a jealous centinel; beware,  
Nor force my active vigilance to proof  
Now or in future, when united Greece,  
No more defensive, may retaliate war,  
Successful war, which prompts aspiring thoughts.  
Rest now a safe spectator. From defeat 316  
Of real warriors, of our fellow Greeks,  
Not Persians lightly arm'd in loose array,  
The loiterers of Athens shall with ease  
Surmount that fence impregnable to thee. 320

274 THE ATHENAID. Book XXX.

To wait an answer he disdain'd, but march'd;  
While arrogance in secret gnash'd the teeth  
Of this dark-minded Spartan, doom'd to prove  
The boding words of Aristides true.

The sun, no longer vertical, began 325  
His slant Hesperian progress. At the head  
Of his own host Cecropia's chief began.  
Enthusiastic flame, without whose aid  
The soldier, patriot, and the bard is faint,  
At this great crisis thus inspires the man 330  
Of human race the most correct in mind:

Ye shades of all, who tyrants have expell'd,  
Ye, who repose at Marathon entomb'd,  
Ye glorious victims, who exalt the name  
Of Salamis, and Manes of the brave 335  
Leonidas, arise! Our banners fan  
With your Elysian breath! Thou god supreme,  
Jove

Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 275

Jove elutherian, fend thy child belov'd,  
With her Gorgonian ægis, to defend  
A people struggling not for spoil, or pow'r, 340  
Not to extend dominion, but maintain  
The right of nature, thy peculiar gift  
To dignify mankind. I lift this prayer,  
My citizens, in rev'rence, not in doubt  
Of your success. Ye vanquishers of Greeks, 345  
Beneath your spears yon servile herd will fall,  
As corn before the sickle. With a look  
Of circumspection he remark'd a swell  
Of ground not fifty paces from the camp;  
Olympiodorus and his bowmen there 350  
He posted first. Now, Æschylus, he said,  
Construct of solid shields a brazen roof;  
In contact close to yonder fence of wood  
Form like the tortoise in his massy shell. 354

The archers, each like Phœbus skill'd, remove  
With show'rs of death the thick defendants soon.



276 THE ATHENAID. Book XXX.

Clear from the rampart, which in height surpass'd

Two cubits. Æschylus not slow performs

His task. A rank of sixty warriors plac'd

Erect, with cov'ring bucklers o'er their heads, 360

A brazen platform to the wall unites.

The next in order stoop behind; the last

Kneel firm on earth. O'er implicated shields

A stable passage thus when Cimon sees,

He mounts, and fearless eyes the Asian camp. 365

Between the rampart's basis and the foe

An empty space observing, on the ground

His spear he fixes, and amidst a storm

Of clatt'ring javelins, arrows, darts and stones,

Swings down. So, shooting from the sulph'rous lap

Of some dark-veiled cloud, a globe of fire 371

Through winds and rain precipitates a blaze

Terrific down the raven pall of night.

His whole division follows; with his band

Myronides, and Æschylus, releas'd 375

From



Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 277

From his first care. Successively they range.

The very fence, by Persian toil uprais'd,

Now from the Persian multitude secures

Th' Athenian near. No obstacle remains

To Aristides, who compleats his plan. 380

Olympiodorus and his active train

With axes keen, and cleaving spades approach;

Hewn down, upturn in that furmounted part,

The fall'n defences, and the levell'd ground, 384

Soon leave an op'ning wide. His strong reserve,

Eight thousand light, two thousand heavy-arm'd,

With Haliartus, and Oileus' son,

Cecropia's chief leads forward to sustain

His first bold warriors. Chileus enters next

With his Tegæans, Aemnestus brave, 390

Pausanias, Amompharetus, the youth

Of Menalippus, all the Spartan host.

Seven Grecian myriads through the breach invade

A ground, with swarms of tents and men oppress'd.

Dire

278 THE ATHENAID. Book XXX.

Dire thus th' irruption of Germanic seas 395  
Through strong Batavian mounds; th' inflated  
brine

Stupendous piles of long-resisting weight  
Bears down, and, baffling strength and art combin'd,  
Foams o'er a country in its seat profound  
Below the surface of th' endang'ring main; 400  
A country, where frugality and toil  
No spot leave waste, no meadow, but in herds  
Redundant; where the num'rous dwellings shew  
Simplicity but plenty, now immers'd  
With all their throng'd inhabitants beneath 405  
Th' unsparing deluge. Aristides swift,  
As if by gen'ral choice the chief supreme,  
Commandment issues, that to either side  
The host extend, that, skirted by the fence,  
With wheeling flanks in front the line assume 410  
A crescent's figure. Thus the fisher skill'd  
With his capacious seines, slow-dragg'd and press'd  
Close

Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 279

Close on each bank, a river's whole expanse  
With all his natives glossy-finn'd involves.

Yet Mindarus, with Mede and Persian ranks, 415  
A large remainder from the morning fight,  
Resists, which soon are slaughter'd; he retreats  
Among the tents, whose multitude impedes  
The Grecians. Aristides straight commands,  
That from the heavy line's disjointed length 420  
A hundred bands expatiate in the chace  
Of foes benumb'd by fear, who neither fight,  
Nor fly, of means depriv'd. The carnage grows  
In every quarter. Fountains seem unclos'd,  
Whence rivulets of blood o'erflow the ground. 425  
O'er satraps, potentates, and princes fall'n,  
Strode Aristides first of men, of heav'n  
The imitator in his civil deeds,  
Now some faint semblance, far as mortal may  
Of that Almighty victor on the field 430  
Ethereal,



Ethereal, when o'er helms, and helmed heads  
 Of prostrate seraphim, and powers o'erthrown,  
 He rode. Still Mindarus, by courage wing'd,  
 From nation flies to nation, still persists  
 Exhorting; though in hopeless thought he sees 435  
 Great Hyperanthes from the shades ascend,  
 And seems to hear the godlike phantom sigh  
 In mournful words like these: Ah! fruitless toil!  
 As once was mine, to rescue from despair  
 The panic fears of Asia! Dead in mind, 440  
 Her host already soon dead clay must lie,  
 Like me on Oeta's rock. Yet Midias brave,  
 With Tiridates rous'd, their efforts join.  
 Against them warlike Medon, and the seed  
 Of Lygdamis, chance brings. They side by side,  
 As heretofore Thermopylæ beheld 446  
 Young Dithyrambus and Diomedon,  
 Had all the day their unresisted wedge  
 Of Locrian shields and Delphian led to deeds,  
 Accumulating



Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 281

Accumulating trophies. Midias falls 450

By Haliartus. From the slain his lance

Recov'ring, tow'rds his patron dear he turns;

Him conqu'ror too of Tiridates views

In joy; joy soon to sorrow chang'd! Fate guides

A casual weapon from a distant hand; 455

Such as at Ramoth from the Syrian bow,

Drawn at a venture, smote between the joints

Of harness strong the Israelitish king,

Who from the fight bade wheel his chariot, stain'd

With his own crimson. Ponderous and broad 460

The hostile lance inflicts a mortal wound

In Medon's gen'rous bosom. Not a sigh

He breathes, in look still placid and sedate,

While death's cold moisture stagnates on his limbs,

By all their pow'rs forsaken. Bear, he said 465

To Haliartus, bear me from the camp,

Nor yet extract the weapon; life, I feel,

Would follow swift, and Medon hath a charge

Yet

Yet to deliver. Some pathetic Muse,  
 In tend'rest measures give these numbers flow! 470  
 Let thine, who plaintive on the pontic verge  
 In servitude Sarmatian, through her page  
 Of sorrows weeps thy banishment from Rome;  
 Or thine, Euripides, whose moral strains  
 Melt sympathy in tears at human woes, 475  
 Thy vary'd tragic themes, or both unite  
 Your inspiration to describe a heart,  
 Where gratitude o'er all affections dear  
 Predominantly sway'd; the faithful heart  
 Of Haliartus at this sudden stroke 480  
 Of direful chance. To death is Medon snatch'd,  
 From glory snatch'd amid victorious friends.  
 The Carian's bosom instant feels combin'd  
 Achilles' anguish at Patroclus dead,  
 The pang of Priam at the fall of Troy, 485  
 Ev'n woman's grief, Andromache's distress  
 For her slain Hector, and his mother's pain  
 To

To see his mangled and dishonour'd corse.  
Great Artemisia's name, th' illustrious blood  
From Lygdamis deriv'd, his own exploits 490  
Of recent fame, are all eras'd from thought  
In Haliartus now; who sinks again  
To Melibœus. On the wounded chief,  
As on his lord, his patron, still he looks  
With all th' affection of a menial, bred 495  
In the same home, and cherish'd in that home  
With lib'ral kindness to his humbler state.  
He clasps the fainting hero, on the shields  
Of weeping friends deposits, and conveys  
Swift through a portal, from its hinges forc'd. 500

Three hours remain'd to Phœbus in his course.  
Close by the entrenchment, under beachen shade  
Of ancient growth, a fountain bursts in rills  
Transparent; thither on the down of moss  
Was Medon borne and laid. Unloose, he said, 505  
My



My helm, and fill from that refreshing stream.  
 Obey'd, he drank a part; then pouring down  
 The remnant, spake: By this libation clear  
 Be testified my thanks to all the gods,  
 That I have liv'd to see my country sav'd 510  
 On this victorious day. My fate requires  
 No lamentation, Haliartus dear,  
 Oh! more, than kindred, dear. Commend me first  
 To Aristides; Medon's parting breath  
 Him victor hails. To Delphi's virtuous priest, 515  
 To my Leonteus, to the glorious son  
 Of Neocles, my salutation bear,  
 To kind Cleander, my Trœzenian host,  
 To Hyacinthus of Eubœa's race,  
 The flower of all her chieftains: 'They have prov'd  
 In me some zeal their island to redeem. 521  
 Transport my ashes to Melissa's care,  
 Them near the reliques of Laconia's king  
 Repose; be mine the neighbour of his urn.

Here



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Here with an utmost effort of his voice, 525

With arms extended, and Elysian look :

Leonidas, the life thy friendship fav'd,  
An off'ring to thy manes, now I close  
Mature in age, to glory not unknown,  
Above the wish, as destitute of hope 530  
To find a fairer time, or better cause,  
Than sends me now a messenger to greet  
Thee with glad tidings of this land preserv'd.

With his own hand the javelin from his breast  
He draws serene ; life issues through the wound.

New shouts, new trumpets, waken from a trance  
Of grief the son of Lygdamis. He sees  
Cleander ; who th' Asopian banks had pass'd,]  
Call'd by Sicinus from Saturnia's dome.  
Lo ! Epidaurian Clitophon, the ranks 540  
Of

Of Phlius with Menander, Sicyon's chief  
 Automedon, the Hermionean spears  
 With Lycus follow, Cephallene's sons,  
 The Acarnanian, all th' Epirot bands,  
 Lepræan Conon, with Mycenæ's youth 545  
 Polydamas, by Arimnestus led  
 The brave Plataeans, with his Thespian files  
 Alcimedon, Nearcus with his force  
 Of Chalcis, Potidæan Tydeus next,  
 Eretrian Cleon, Lampon, and the troop 550  
 Of little Styra, Corinth's banners last,  
 By Adimantus and Alcmaeon rang'd.

Too late you come for glory, them bespake  
 The Carian sad: Lo! half the foes destroy'd  
 By Aristides, fugitives the rest; 555  
 Lo! there the only loss, which Greece sustains.

To him Cleander, with devout regret  
 O'er Medon, honour'd paranymp and guest,

Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 287

His head inclining: Not too late we come  
For sacrifice of Persians to the ghost 560  
Of this dead hero. Ah! what floods of tears  
Will fall in Trœzen—But let grief prevail  
Hereafter. Son of Lygdamis, renounce  
Despondency; Acanthè still survives  
To fire thy breast as Aripheia mine; 565  
I hear her prompting my vindictive arm.  
From thy experience of this glorious day  
Lead thy Trœzenian host, where best to point  
His strenuous efforts. Let thy guiding zeal  
For me, long cursing my inactive post, 570  
Yet find one track to fame. These gallant words  
Of cordial frankness from dejection lift  
The Carian brave, not less than Phœbus cheer'd  
The languid son of Priam on the bank  
Of Xanthus; when a stony mass, of weight 575  
To stay a keel on Hellespontine sands,  
By Ajax hurl'd, benumb'd the Trojan's frame.

Thus



Thus Haliartus: Through that open gate,  
 New forc'd, the shortest, safest passage lies;  
 But, to acquire some lustre, I can shew 580  
 Another track for prowess yet to shine.

He leads, all follow, save Corinthian bands  
 With Adimantus, hast'ning through the gate,  
 Soon as to him th' intelligence is brought;  
 Who ent'ring, sees a carnage which confounds 585  
 A timid spirit. By Alcmaeon urg'd,  
 Close by the fence he marches; none he meets  
 But fly before him. Adimantus lifts  
 His spear, and satiates cowardice with blood  
 Of unresisting men. By cheap success 590  
 Betray'd, a distant quarter he attains,  
 Where Mindarus confronts him. From his steed  
 Th' unyielding satrap whirls a rapid lance,  
 Which nails the base Corinthian to the ground.  
 Alcmaeon next is wounded; more had bled, 595  
 But



But Aristides o'er that part, devoid  
 Of tents, his dreadful crescent in array  
 Is forming new. The Persian starts; he flies  
 To one last angle of the spacious camp,  
 Sole spot unforc'd. Half circled now in front, 600  
 The Attic, Spartan, and Tegæan ranks,  
 In motion slow, yet moving on, augment  
 Progressively their terrors, like a range  
 Of clouds, which thicken on the brow of night,  
 A final wreck portending to a fleet, 605  
 Already shatter'd by the morning storm.  
 Round Mindarus the remnant of his host  
 Collected still is numerous. Them he sees  
 Oft look behind, a sight that ill accords  
 With warriors; but, as now in columns deep 610  
 Its glitt'ring horns that direful crescent shews  
 Within the limits of a javelin's cast,  
 All turn intent on flight at large; they break

Their own inclosure down, whose late defence

Is present bane, and intercepts escape. 615

Lo! Haliartus; all whose grief is chang'd

To fire, heroic flame. - Three myriads fresh

He pours; that crouded angle he invests,

Preventing flight. Cleander looks around

Like some tornado menacing a bark, 620

Which soon unseam'd and parted sinks ingulph'd;

He finds a breach and with him enters death.

The long-enduring satrap, whose mild soul

Calamity hath worn, resembles now

The poor desponding failor, who is left 625

Last of the found'ring vessel on a plank

Alone. No coast appears; the greedy swell

He sees around, expecting ev'ry wave

Will terminate his being, and forgoes

All hope of succour. His afflicted soul 630

Thus with an effort equal to his rank

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The prince explores: What, Mindarus, remains  
For thee deserted! In another's home  
Cleora dwell, tyrannus is no more;  
Slain is Mardonius, Asia's glory fall'n; 635  
Thou hast too long been fugitive this day;  
Like Teribazus close a term of woe;  
Like him in death be honour'd. He dismounts,  
He grasps a spear. Such dignity of shame  
To Ilian Hector, from his flight recall'd, 640  
Great Homer's Muse imparted. While the prince  
Is meditating thus, a man sublime  
Tow'rs from th' Athenians, who suspend their  
march;  
Unlike the son of Peleus in his ire  
Implacable, he represents a god 645  
In aspect, god of mercy, not of arms.

Know, chieftain, he began, to me the Greeks  
One Persian life have granted; it is thine.



In this day's trial I have noted well

Thy constancy and manhood; I, who prize 650  
The gems of virtue, in whatever clime,

O Persian! whether in a friend or foe

Their never-changing lustre they display;

I, Aristides, my protecting arm

Extend. Time presses; yield thee, ere too late;

Captivity no burden shalt thou find; 656

Till safe, without a ransom, thou regain

Thy native feat. The Persian melts like snow

In all its rigour at the noon-tide sun.

This unforeseen, humane demeanour calms 660

His mind, and hushes ev'ry desp'rate thought.

He thus replies: On all my actions past

Hath fortune frown'd; perhaps a captive state

With Aristides, whom Masištius lov'd,

Mardonius prais'd, and all mankind reveres, 665

Forebodes a change of fortune to my gain!

Thy



Thy condescending wisdom, O supreme  
In justice, knowledge, and benignant deeds,  
May lift a man of sorrows from despair !

He yields. Th' Athenian leads him through the  
press 670

Secure ; himself a spectacle avoids,  
Which others covet. Lo ! on ev'ry side  
Keen swords of massacre are wav'd. To maids  
Deflow'r'd, dishonour'd wives, and gods prophan'd,  
To Athens, Theſpia, and Platæa burnt, 675  
The Greeks compleat their sacrifice. The sun,  
Wont on thoſe fields of glitt'ning green to ſmile,  
And trace Afopus through his cryſtal maze,  
Now ſetting, glances over lakes of blood ;  
While fate with Perſian carnage chafes the ſtream  
No longer ſmooth and limpid, but o'erſwolv'n, 681  
And foaming purple, with encreaſing heaps

Of

Of carcases and arms. Night drops her shade  
 On thirty myriads slaughter'd. Thus thy death,  
 Leonidas of Sparta, was aveng'd, 685  
 Greece thus by Attic virtue was preserv'd.



**F I N I S.**

# ERRATA.

- B. XXIII. l. 49, *for* Cephallenia, *read* Cephalenia.
- B. XXVII. l. 167, *dele* a.
- B. XXVII. l. 310, *for* protentous, *read* portentous.
- B. XXVIII. l. 80, *dele* the comma after consign'd.
- B. XXIX. l. 13, *dele* the comma after waits.
- B. XXIX. l. 335, *dele* the comma after Lacedæmon's.
- B. XXIX. l. 512, *dele* and.
- B. XXX. l. 46, *for* involuntary, *read* involuntary.
- B. XXX. l. 91, *for* wise, *read* good.
- B. XXX. l. 112, *for* like, *read* as.





